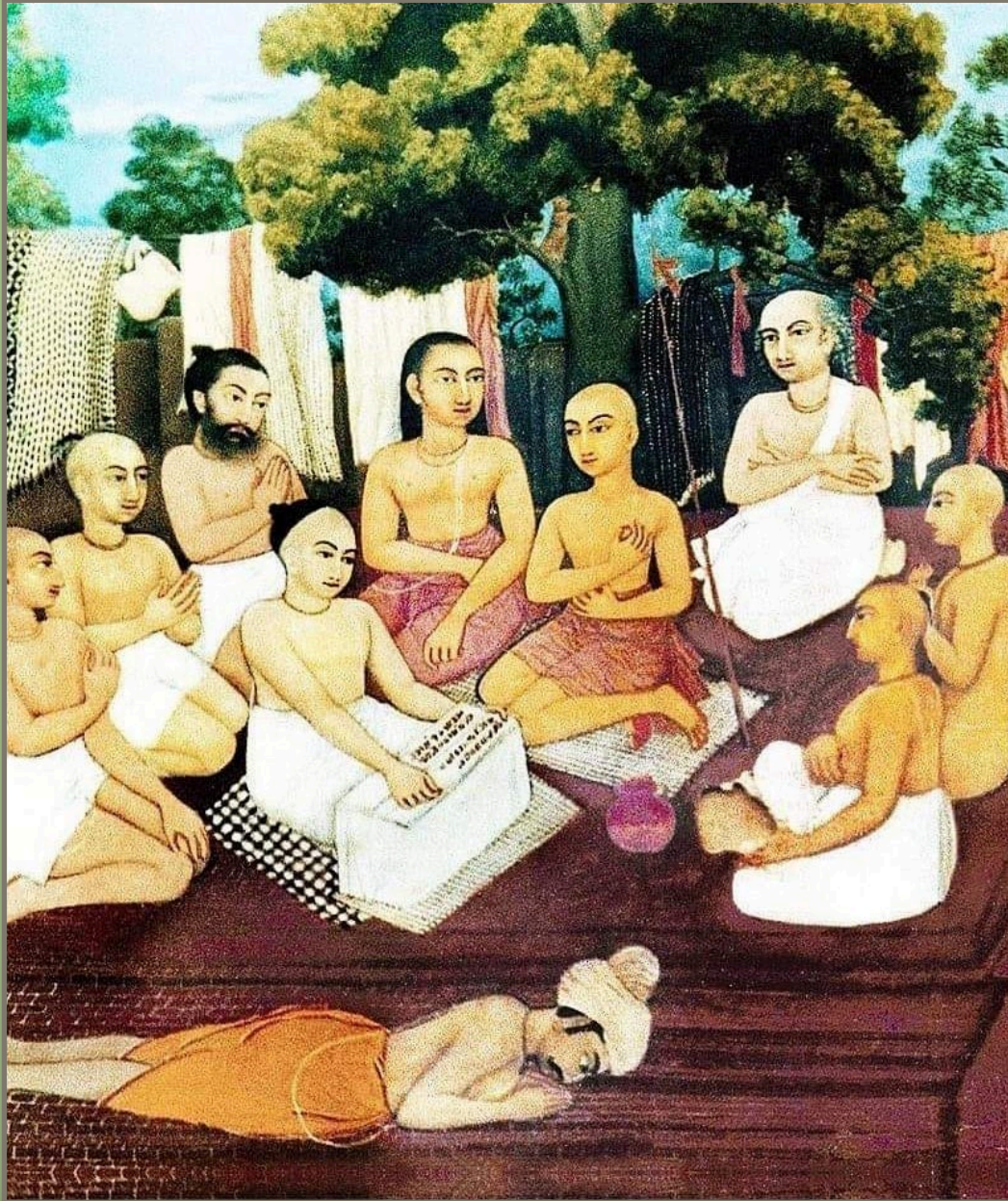


Jīva-tattva:

The Svarūpa of the Jīva, Mukti & Prīti



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Maṅgalācaraṇa

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*nāma om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

*nāmaste sarasvate deve gauravāni pracārine
nirviseṣa sunnyavādi pascatyā desatārine*

*nānā-śāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānāṁ hita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānyau śaraṇyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanānandena mattālikau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honored all over the three worlds and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs* and are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ purāṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah*

May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī be transcendently situated in the innermost core of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, he has descended in the Age of Kali by his causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most elevated [*rasa*] of [*bhakti*], the [*rasa*] of conjugal love.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah*

The meaning of scriptures is revealed to the great souls whose *bhakti* to the Lord is equaled by *bhakti* to guru.

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

Introduction and Overview

This is the second treatise in the *Jīva-tattva* series, the first one being, *Jīva-tattva: Did We Fall From Kṛṣṇa's Līlā?*

The details of the *jīva's svarūpa* are found primarily in the Upaniṣads (Śruti) and Purāṇas (Smṛti), along with texts and commentaries by previous *ācāryas* from various Vedic lineages, who are accepted as authorities by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Jīva Gosvāmī, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and all other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*.

Given the vast scope and depth of those literatures and commentaries it would be a daunting endeavor to study them all exhaustively to extract the key details related to the *jīva's svarūpa*. What to speak of analyzing and understanding all of it correctly.

Fortunately, we don't have to do that because Jīva Gosvāmī did exactly that in his *Paramātmā Sandarbha*. And Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa provided critical details and insights in his *Govinda-bhāṣya* commentary of the *Brahma-sūtras* (aka, *Vedānta-sūtras*), specifically in the sections dealing with the *svārūpa* of the *jīva* and *mukti*. *Mukti* and *prīti*¹ are discussed in detail in Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prīti Sandarbha*. These invaluable contributions were among their many gifts for posterity.

That being said, even studying these texts in earnest is not likely something the average Vaiṣṇava will have the time or inclination to do. As such, in service to all Vaiṣṇavas, in this treatise I have compiled and organized these presentations systematically, including all key details, while focusing on the essential aspects necessary for a comprehensive understanding of these topics and related subjects, especially *mukti* (liberation) and *prīti*, the ultimate goal – attaining *prema-bhakti* and entering *vraja-līlā* in a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

In the *Brahma-sūtras*, the discussion of the *jīva's svarūpa* is integrated with the subject of *mukti* – the *jīva's* liberation from *māyā-śakti's avidyā* and simultaneous realization of its inherent constitutional spiritual nature – its *svārūpa*. *Mukti* is the initial level of self-realization and being established in one's eternal spiritual nature – *brahma-bhūta*. But there are higher levels which will be explored in detail.

Regarding *mukti*, there is a common misconception that it means merging into Brahman – Kṛṣṇa's personal effulgence (*brahma-jyoti*), and nothing more. But as we will see, *mukti* has various levels and aspects which are quite astonishing, and likely unknown to most Vaiṣṇavas. Also, some devotees believe merging into Brahman is temporary and one can fall from that position. That, and other misconceptions, will be reviewed and reconciled.

¹ There are many nuanced variations in Jīva Gosvāmī's explanations of the meaning of the word *prīti*. Here is one of the basic definitions: The functioning of all types of intense bliss belonging to the *hlādinī-śakti* is placed in the devotees and is called *prīti* for the Lord. *Prīti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 63. *Prīti* is sometimes said to be synonymous with *bhakti* and *prema*, and it is often defined as 'affection' for Kṛṣṇa.

There are also discussions in these texts about the liberated *jīva*'s eligibility to attain a spiritual body of *cit-śakti* to facilitate a relationship with Kṛṣṇa and participate in one of His unlimited *līlās* in the spiritual world, providing the *jīva* focused on those desires during their *sādhana* leading to their desired goal.

In *Prīti Sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī discusses many aspects of *mukti*, including the five types of *mukti* – *sārūpya*, *sārṣṭi*, *saṁipya*, *sālokya*, and *sāyujya*. There is also a discussion about how one's eternal spiritual identity manifests along with one's *prīti* for Kṛṣṇa, all of which will be examined in detail.

In addition, I'll review the process (*abhidheya*) taught by Lord Caitanya – *rāgānuga-bhakti* – by which, one attains an eternal spiritual identity and body to facilitate a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, specifically in *vraja-līlā*. This will also include a detailed explanation of how *prema-bhakti* appears in the heart of the *taṭastha-śakti jīva* through the agency and mercy of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*.

A number of books and articles have appeared over the last several years dealing with the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* from various perspectives. Most of the articles and books attempted to prove that the *jīva*'s *rasa* with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās* (along with all related details) is inherent in its *svarūpa* and is unique for each *jīva*. In other words, it is predetermined for each *jīva* by Kṛṣṇa, and the *jīva* has no choice in the matter.

There are also those who promote the unsupported idea that only one's *guru* can give the details of one's spiritual identity, and which *vraja-vāsī* to follow, i.e., the practice of *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā*. Again, no choice for the *jīva*. It should be noted that none of the *purva ācāryas*² teach this idea, nor did Lord Caitanya. One's *gurus* and advanced associates are certainly the primary and essential influences regarding one's choices and progress, but as we will learn, the final choice is solely up to each *jīva*.

Unfortunately, none of the writings that I've examined have provided a thorough and proper analysis of everything that has been presented in *śāstra* and from the previous *ācāryas*. In those articles and books, references are certainly given from *śāstra*, as well as from the previous *ācāryas*, but never the complete picture, and quite often out of context. What to speak of being tainted with biased and unsupported speculations, as well as weak or faulty logic.

In this treatise, I will systematically present all of the available details and connect the relevant intricacies with *śāstric* logic and sound reasoning, which is necessary for a proper and comprehensive understanding. Everything will be supported extensively by *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra*. After examining the full scope of this knowledge, all current issues and misconceptions will be easily resolved in the face of the incontrovertible and unambiguous facts – *tattvas* and *siddhāntas*.

² The *purva-ācāryas* of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism are generally said to be the Six Gosvāmīs, who are considered to be the architects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy and its *siddhāntas*.

The final section of this book asks the question: “Is the *jīva*’s *līlā* relationship with Kṛṣṇa inherent in their svarupa?” Although it may be tempting for some readers to go directly to that section for the final conclusions, readers are advised to exercise patience and go through the entire book. The reason being that the refutations of the inherency ideas occur throughout the book as the evidence presents itself. Thus, reading the last section without this prior knowledge will result in an incomplete understanding of all the relevant details and the final conclusion.

The Purposes of this Treatise

The Focus

The first part of this treatise is focused on the inherent characteristics of the *jīva's svarūpa* as presented in the commentaries of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa on the *Brahma-sūtras* and Jīva Gosvāmī's comprehensive presentation and analysis in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, which has additional details and insights.

These two sources are the most comprehensive repository of knowledge regarding the *svarūpa* of the *taṭastha-śakti jīvas* and they contain all the known evidence from the Upaniṣads (Śruti) and the Purāṇas (Smṛti), and most importantly, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, along with thorough analyses. That includes doubts, challenges, and/or a comparison of alternative philosophical perspectives, most of which are shown to be faulty.

Outside of these two sources there isn't any other in depth analysis available in *śāstra* or from the previous *ācāryas* regarding the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*. Nor are there additional details available from other sources that would change key aspects or add anything significant beyond what they presented. This point is critically important to establish and understand for those who might be mistakenly inclined to challenge otherwise.

Before writing his *Govinda-bhāṣya* commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa wrote a shorter versified (*kārikā*) commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the *Brahma-sūtras: Brahma-sūtra-kārikā-bhāṣya*. It is a more succinct explanation of the *sūtras*, and with a focus on *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa per Lord Caitanya's teachings about *rāgānuga-bhakti*. So this provides an additional and valuable perspective on the meanings of the *sūtras* from the same author.

The *jīva's* realization of its *svarūpa* – *mukti* – is an integral topic that will be examined to expand the analysis of the *jīva's svarūpa*, as it was presented in the *Brahma-sūtras* and *Prīti Sandarbha*. There are different types of *mukti*, culminating in the highest attainment possible – a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and entering Goloka Vṛndāvana to participate in *vraja-līlā* as one of the *vraja-vāsīs*. That requires the development of one's *bhakti* and *prīti* for Kṛṣṇa via the *abhidheya* taught by Lord Caitanya – *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Resolving Misconceptions and Conflicting Statements

It is critically important for all serious Vaiṣṇavas to understand the correct *tattvas* and *siddhāntas* regarding these and other important topics. Maintaining and propagating misconceptions, and especially *apasiddhānta*, is never good for anyone's *bhakti*, nor for the integrity of Lord Caitanya's movement. It is in fact a very serious concern with many potential negative ramifications.

Thoughtful and introspective Vaiṣṇavas diligently seek out and remove misconceptions, errors, and doubts from their comprehension of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Thus, they

elevate their foundational understanding to higher and stronger levels of faith – *śraddhā*. One's *adhikāra* and progress on the path of *bhakti* are measured in large part by one's faith, and that faith is based primarily on the depth and clarity of one's understanding of the knowledge presented in *śāstra*, i.e., *kaniṣṭha*, *madhyama* and *uttama*.

To be very clear, that doesn't mean everyone has to become a scholar. But it does imply that those who are very earnest are also committed to regularly hear and learn the truth from higher authorities.

For contemporary Vaiṣṇavas, *śravaṇam* is equally as important as *kīrtanam*. They are two extremely critical and wholly integrated *aṅgas* of *sādhana-bhakti*. The truth is that *kīrtanam* will not be as effective without sufficient *śravaṇam*.

The primary misconception currently being propounded is that all of the details regarding the *jīva*'s eternal relationship (*rasa*) with Kṛṣṇa in any of His *līlās* in the spiritual world are inherent and dormant, like unfructified seeds, within each *jīva*'s *svarūpa*.

It is also asserted that these details are predetermined for each *jīva* by Kṛṣṇa, and as such, the *jīvās* have no choice in the matter because Kṛṣṇa has already decided how He wants us to serve and love Him. This also includes the notion that *bhakti* and *prema* are inherent and dormant in the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*, and all of these details will be awakened from their dormant state by *sādhana* and *sādhu-saṅga*.

In addition to resolving those misconceptions, I will also examine and reconcile Śrīla Prabhupāda's seemingly contradictory and ambiguous statements regarding this subject, many of which have fostered some of this confusion, due to a misunderstanding of his presentation and intended meaning.

Thus, as with the *Jīva* fall treatise, it's not a simple matter of just presenting the evidence from *śāstra* and the previous *ācāryas* to establish the correct *tattvas* and *siddhāntas*. There are serious misconceptions about these topics, and that does not bode well for the continuing integrity of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, so these issues must also be dealt with and properly resolved.

In order to benefit fully from this presentation it is recommended that readers go through the text systematically in the order presented, and resist the temptation to read later sections first. The reason is that many later sections depend on the reader having acquired the critical information and evidence presented before, which relates to the later sections. Otherwise, incorrect assumptions may be made, mistakenly thinking that some details have not been presented.

The Brahma-sūtras – The Vedānta-sūtras of Śrīla Vyāsadeva

Śrīla Prabhupāda Explains the Vedānta-Sūtras

Śrīla Prabhupāda dedicated his translation and commentary of the *Bhagavad-gītā* to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* – *Govinda-bhāṣya*. For those not familiar with the *Brahma-sūtras*, here is an excerpt from Śrīla Prabhupāda's explanation, given in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, 7.106.

The *Vedānta-sūtra*, which consists of aphorisms revealing the method of understanding Vedic knowledge, is the concise form of all Vedic knowledge. It begins with the words *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Now is the time to inquire about the Absolute Truth.” The human form of life is especially meant for this purpose, and therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* very concisely explains the human mission. This is confirmed by the words of the *Vāyu* and *Skanda Purāṇas*, which define a *sūtra* as follows:

*alpākṣaram asandigdham sāra-vat viśvato-mukham
astobham anavadyam ca sūtram sūtra-vido viduḥ*

“A *sūtra* is a compilation of aphorisms that expresses the essence of all knowledge in a minimum of words. It must be universally applicable and faultless in its linguistic presentation.” Anyone familiar with such *sūtras* must be aware of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which is well known among scholars by the following additional names: (1) *Brahma-sūtra*, (2) *Śārīraka*, (3) *Vyāsa-sūtra*, (4) *Bādarāyaṇa-sūtra*, (5) *Uttara-mīmāṃsā*, and (6) *Vedānta-darśana*.

There are four chapters (*adhyāyas*) in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and there are four divisions [or sections] (*pādas*) in each chapter. Therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* may be referred to as *ṣoḍaśa-pāda*, or sixteen divisions of aphorisms.

The theme of each and every division is fully described in terms of five different subject matters (*adhikaraṇas*), which are technically called *pratijñā*, *hetu*, *udāharaṇa*, *upanaya* and *nigamana*. Every theme must necessarily be explained with reference to *pratijñā*, or a solemn declaration of the purpose of the treatise.

The solemn declaration given in the beginning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*, which indicates that this book was written with the solemn declaration to inquire about the Absolute Truth. Similarly, reasons must be expressed (*hetu*), examples must be given in terms of various facts (*udāharaṇa*), the theme must gradually be brought nearer for understanding (*upanaya*), and finally it must be supported by authoritative quotations from the Vedic *śāstras* (*nigamana*).

...According to learned scholars, there are three different sources of knowledge, which are called *prasthāna-traya*. According to these scholars, Vedānta is one of such sources, for it presents Vedic knowledge on the basis of logic and sound arguments. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*

(13.5) the Lord says, *brahma-sūtrapadaīś caiva hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ*: “Understanding of the ultimate goal of life is ascertained in the *Brahma-sūtra* by legitimate logic and argument concerning cause and effect.”

Therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* is known as *nyāya-prasthāna*, the Upaniṣads are known as *Śruti-prasthāna*, and the *Gītā*, *Mahābhārata*, and *Purāṇas* are known as *smṛti-prasthāna*. All scientific knowledge of transcendence must be supported by Śruti, Smṛti, and a sound logical basis.

...As mentioned above, the *Vedānta-sūtra* consists of four chapters. The first two chapters discuss the relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is known as *sambandha-jñāna*, or knowledge of the relationship.

The third chapter describes how one can act in his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called *abhidheya-jñāna*. The relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Lord is described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya kṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’*. “The living entity is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme God.” (CC, Madhya 20.108)

Therefore, to act in that relationship one must perform *sādhana-bhakti*, or the prescribed duties of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called *abhidheya-jñāna*.

The fourth chapter describes the result of such devotional service (*prayojana-jñāna*). This ultimate goal of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. The words *anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt* in the *Vedānta-sūtra* indicate this ultimate goal.

In the *Brahma-sūtras*, doubts and/or challenges are introduced by presenting alternative philosophical arguments and ideas from other Vedic lineages and their *ācāryas*. These are referred to as *pūrva-pakṣa*,³ which are then refuted by arguing in favor of the factual *tattvas* and *siddhāntas*, along with *śāstric* support. It is a constant, that throughout history there are controversies and issues regarding the correct understanding of foundational philosophical truths. Jīva Gosvāmī also introduces challenges and doubts in his *Sandarbhās*.

³ *Pūrva-pakṣa* literally means former argument. It is a tradition in the debates of Indian Logicians. It involves building a deep familiarity with the opponent's point of view before criticizing it. The *pūrva-pakṣa* approach has been used by Adi Shankarācāya as well as Rāmānuja and later *ācāryas* in their works.

The Ṣaṭ-sandarbhās – Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Philosophy Elucidated

A Very Brief Summary

*‘bhāgavata-sandarbhā’-nāma kaila grantha-sāra
bhāgavata-siddhāntera tāhān pāiye pāra*

The *Bhāgavata Sandarbha* [known primarily as *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha*] is the essence of all scriptures. This work presents the limit of all *siddhānta* concerning Bhagavān. CC, 3.4.229

Jīva Gosvāmī's *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas*, which collectively span thousands of pages, were compiled to analyze every important facet of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy as it relates to the accepted *tattvas* found in the Vedas, and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhāntas* derived from those *tattvas*.

This is Śrī Jīva's *Maṅgalācaraṇa* at the beginning of *Paramātmā Sandarbha*:⁴

For the pleasure of the two sages, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, I am rearranging this book, compiled by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who was born in South India.

Some parts of his book were in order, some out of order, while others were incomplete or missing. After thorough deliberation, Śrī Jīva now writes this book in the appropriate order.

Each of the *Sandarbhās* cover a specific topic and all related details, as their titles indicate: *Tattva Sandarbha*, *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*, *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, *Bhakti Sandarbha* and *Prīti Sandarbha*.

The systematic presentations developed throughout the six texts also provide the foundation for a clear understanding of *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. The *prayojana* is discussed in *Prīti Sandarbha*, where *prema* and all aspects of *rasa* are discussed.

Paramātmā Sandarbha, is a primary focus for this analysis of the *jīva's svarūpa*. It is very important to reiterate that Jīva Gosvāmī did not leave out any consequential details or related aspects, nor was he ambiguous or cryptic in his presentation, as everyone will observe when the references are examined.

Jīva Gosvāmī's extensive compilations in the *Sandarbhās* cover every important aspect of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy in full detail, with supporting references primarily from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, as well as the Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, *Brahma-sūtras*, and more. Everything is fully corroborated, and Śrī Jīva's Sanskrit scholarship, logic, and analytical skills are legendary.

⁴ All of Jīva Gosvāmī's *Sandarbhās* are based on research initially compiled by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, a fact he acknowledges at the beginning of each *Sandarbhā*.

The Analytical Methodology of this Treatise

The Books of the Previous Ācāryas

I've often heard devotees quote Śrīla Prabhupāda's statement, "Everything you need is in my books", or words to that effect. To be clear, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not mean that every single detail of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy is delineated fully in his books. He meant that everything we "need" is there, either in detail or in essence. And one of the most important things we *need* is to study the books of the previous ācāryas.

For example, Jīva Gosvāmī's *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas* contain thousands of pages of very important philosophical analyses, and all of those details are not in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. That also applies to Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't even have time to finish translating and commenting on the very important final three cantos of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*.

This is precisely why Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed us repeatedly – in his books – to study the books of the previous ācāryas, after carefully studying his books. Even still, many devotees mistakenly think that Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed us *not* to study their books. But that is not true, as we will see.

Pure devotees have prepared many books of knowledge on the basis of authorized scriptures. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and his assistants, under the instructions of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, have all written various literatures for the guidance of prospective devotees, and anyone who is very serious about raising himself to the standard of a pure devotee of the Lord must take advantage of those literatures. SB, 3.7.39, Purport

Many devotees boast that they only read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, which they claim is a sign of their loyalty to him. Apparently, they have not studied Śrīla Prabhupāda's books very carefully because they've obviously missed these repeated and very compelling instructions.

A sincere devotee must, therefore, be prepared to hear the Vedic literature like the Upaniṣads, Vedānta and other literature left by the previous authorities or Gosvāmīs, for the benefit of his progress. Without hearing such literature, one cannot make actual progress. And without hearing and following the instructions, the show of devotional service becomes worthless and therefore a sort of disturbance on the path of devotional service. SB, 1.2.12, Purport

In the *Appendix*, I've included a morning walk conversation where Śrīla Prabhupāda adamantly denies ever saying we should not study the books of the previous ācāryas. In fact he emphasized that we most certainly *should* study them. Hopefully, the conclusive evidence in this section will resolve these serious misconceptions once and for all. Here is an excerpt from that morning walk, May 13, 1975, Perth, Australia.

Paramahansa: Śrīla Prabhupāda, I remember once I heard a tape where you told us that we should not try to read the books of previous ācāryas.

Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Amogha: That we should not try to read Bhaktivinoda's books or earlier books of other, all *ācāryas*. So I was just wondering...

Prabhupāda: I never said that.

Amogha: You didn't say that? Oh.

Prabhupāda: How is that?

Amogha: I thought you said that we should not read the previous *ācāryas'* books.

Prabhupāda: No, you should read.

Amogha: We should.

Prabhupāda: It is misunderstanding.

...Amogha: When the devotees went to India this year, they said that Acyutananda Svāmī very, chastised them that "You should never... If I catch any of you buying Bhaktisiddhanta's books from Gauḍīya Matha then I will take them away." Something like this.

Paramahansa: Yeah, that was, the reason was because of, he didn't want the devotees going to Gauḍīya Matha. But there's nothing wrong with the idea of studying the previous *ācāryas'* books.

Prabhupāda: No. Who said? That is wrong. We are following previous *ācāryas*. I never said that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda also explained that the proper approach to seriously studying, analyzing and discussing philosophical topics is to study *śāstra* with his purports, along with the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas*. The previous *ācāryas* are all realized devotees (*prema-bhaktas*), and the Gosvāmīs are *nitya-siddhas*, whose insights and realizations are invaluable, and equally as essential as Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentaries. These are the very source texts that Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura studied.

Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and *ācāryas* like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars, even after the time of Lord Caitanya, made elaborate commentaries on the Bhāgavatam. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages. SB, 1.1.1, Purport

It is necessary, therefore, for the serious students of Śrīmad-bhāgavatam to follow the notes and comments of the great ācāryas like Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī. To others, who are not devotees of the Lord, the comments and explanations of such ācāryas may appear to be grammatical jugglery, but to the students who are in the line of disciplic succession, the explanations of the great ācāryas are quite fit. SB, 3.4.28, Purport

In addition to studying the commentaries of the previous ācāryas, it is also essential to study their books wherein they presented all aspects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy in full detail: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, *Ṣaṭ Sandarbhas*, and many more. We will examine many references from these books in this treatise.

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu, the teacher of the science of devotional service, wrote several books, of which the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter of devotees, devotional service and Kṛṣṇa must read this book.

Sanātana Gosvāmī also wrote a special commentary on the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-bhāgavatam known as the *daśama-tippaṇī*, which is so excellent that by reading it one can understand very deeply the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in His exchanges of loving activities.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is described as the *bhakti-rasācārya*, or one who knows the essence of devotional service. His famous book, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, is the science of devotional service, and by reading this book one can understand the meaning of devotional service.

Another of his famous books is the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. In this book he elaborately explains the loving affairs and transcendental activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Radharani. CC, 1.5.203, Purport

As stated in the *Maṅgalācaraṇa*, the Six Gosvāmīs were the ones who thoroughly and carefully studied śāstra and previous authorities to delineate and substantiate Lord Caitanya's teachings, i.e., Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, along with its applied processes. They alone are the architects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy and they are the last word in understanding all related tattvas and siddhāntas.

False devotees, lacking the conclusion of transcendental knowledge, think that artificially shedding tears will deliver them. Similarly, other false devotees think that studying books of the previous ācāryas is inadvisable, like studying dry empiric philosophies.

But Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, following the previous ācāryas, has inculcated the conclusions of the scriptures in the six theses called the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhas*. False devotees who have very little knowledge of such conclusions fail to achieve pure devotion for want of zeal in accepting the favorable directions for devotional service given by self-realized devotees. CC, 1.2.117, Purport

If you want to preach the gospel of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then the personalities who established, by writing these books, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, Vidagdha-mādhava, so many books they have written. So we must go through them, must try to understand.

Then we can understand what is the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Caitanya-mangala*, there are so many. *Caitanya-candradoya* by Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. So many devotees, they have given us so many high literatures, we should consult. Therefore the prayer is, *Śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhistam sthapitam yena bhu-tale*. Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture, Nectar of Devotion, Bombay, 1.8.1973

Everything presented by *ācāryas* coming after the Six Gosvāmīs must pass the test of fidelity to the teachings of these original *purva-ācāryas* without exception. Otherwise the integrity of the *parampara* becomes undermined. Śrīla Prabhupāda made that abundantly and repeatedly clear in his books and lectures.

Thus, in order to understand Lord Caitanya, one has to follow the direct disciples of Lord Caitanya – the Six Gosvāmīs – and especially the path chalked out by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. TLC, Chapter 17

A guru cannot change the message of the disciplic succession. SSR, Chapter 2

It is therefore not acceptable to spin or ignore the statements of the Gosvāmīs in an attempt to validate statements by later *ācāryas* or *sādhus* which may appear to be contradictory. That is not how the process works. Everything must be harmonized with the sources – not the other way around.

In addition, it cannot be argued that only the later *ācāryas* can understand the *purva ācāryas* so we have to blindly accept everything they have said or written, even if it is contradictory. After reading this book it should be more than obvious that this is not the case.

Especially considering the unique and unprecedented circumstances that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, and particularly Śrīla Prabhupāda, faced in their respective missions to spread this knowledge beyond the boundaries of India to the greater world population. These new audiences had no exposure to the vast body of Vedic knowledge, its esoteric truths, concepts, principles, and astonishing histories. Most people were wrongly taught that Vedic histories were “mythologies”.

All of those time and circumstance considerations must definitely be taken into account when resolving any apparent discrepancies or contradictions. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote that he made many time and circumstance adjustments. We will examine those statements later.

There is one additional important consideration in this regard. There are camps of Vaiṣṇavas who assert that one cannot possibly understand the books of the previous *ācāryas* unless one has the direct guidance of a living *guru* or advanced Vaiṣṇavas. They also insist that *śravaṇam* specifically and *only* means hearing the actual sound vibration directly from a living *sādhū* or

guru. They assert that anything less than that is not potent *śravaṇam*, even somewhat ineffective.

Śrīla Prabhupāda does not agree with this misconception. Here's what he said in a lecture on the *Nectar of Devotion (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)*, in Vṛndāvana, 10.20.1972. He explains the astonishing truth of associating with the previous *ācāryas* via their *vani*.

So our *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, the *śrī-rūpa sanātana bhaṭṭa-raghunātha*, *śrī-jīva gopāla-bhaṭṭa dāsa-raghunātha*, the Six Gosvāmīns, and if we associate with them... this book, *Nectar of Devotion, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, if you read regularly, try to understand, this means you are associating with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī directly. And if you act accordingly, then you are serving their lotus feet.

Understandably, Jīva Gosvāmī also does not agree with these very misguided and rather extremist ideas. Here is his explanation from *Bhakti Sandarbha* about the various types and levels of *śravaṇam*, all of which are extremely powerful and beneficial for one's progress.

Hearing from elevated devotees:

If one hears about the Lord from the mouth of elevated devotees, it is supremely glorious and grants immense delight to those who have attained relish for such topics. There are two categories of hearing from elevated devotees - to hear literature composed by a great devotee, and to hear literature recited by a great devotee. BhS, *Anuccheda* 256

Optimization of hearing:

In regard to hearing, the following should be considered. To hear about the names, forms, qualities, pastimes and associates of the Lord is supremely auspicious. Superior to this is to hear the essays written by elevated devotees, and when such compositions are sung by a great devotee, the benefit is greater still. To hear *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* is superior even to this, and better yet when sung by a great devotee.

In addition, one should repeatedly hear the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of the particular manifestation of the Lord for which one feels an attraction, as indicated in this verse: "One should worship the Supreme Lord in the form of one's choice." SB, 11.3.48 Furthermore, one should hear about the deity of one's choice from the lips of a great devotee who has the same devotional mood.

...We have thus explained the practice of hearing. This precedes the practices of singing and remembering, because one cannot have knowledge of these without first hearing. In particular, if one does not have the fortune to hear directly what is sung by a great devotee, one should personally sing the same topics of the Lord on one's own, because hearing is a primary process. Consequently, we find a comment to this effect in the following verse of Śrīmad-bhāgavatam:

On the other hand, even if imperfectly composed, that literature in which every verse contains the names that extol the glories of the unlimited Lord destroys the sins of humanity, because saintly people hear, sing and recite such names of the Lord. SB, 1.5.11

Śrīdhara Svāmī comments: If a speaker is present, the *sādhus* will hear the names of the Lord recited by her or him, if an audience is present, they will recite these names for their benefit, and if neither speaker nor audience is present, they will sing themselves. BhS, *Anuccheda* 262

Both Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīdhara Svāmī confirm that one should regularly study these literatures whether or not one is fortunate enough to have the advantage of advanced association at any given time, because hearing is a primary process.

Here is another obvious fact in this regard. Even if one has advanced association, one will still have to read all these books on their own to be able to discuss them and ask questions, because *gurus* and advanced Vaiṣṇavas are most certainly not going to personally read all these books out loud to each individual student and explain every minute detail. Private study of these books (*śravaṇam*) is an essential and constant part of the *sādhana* of every serious practitioner, whether or not they have regular personal guidance.

Therefore, even in the circumstantial absence of direct personal instruction, one should still study these books, because following Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions to do so will invoke his mercy along with Paramātmā's internal guidance – *Caitya-guru*.

Because Śrīla Prabhupāda explicitly and repeatedly instructed us to study these books we have already been pre-approved with unlimited credit on our “Spiritual MasterCard” to take as much of that wealth of knowledge as Kṛṣṇa mercifully reveals to us in reciprocation for our sincere and eager engagement in the *aṅga* of *śravaṇam*.

Finally, it is very important to understand that studying these books should never be misconstrued as, “jumping over” Śrīla Prabhupāda. It is in fact, “jumping with” Śrīla Prabhupāda by our side, along with his full approval and guidance. *Śravaṇam* of the *vani* of the previous *ācāryas*, with a mindful purpose and focus, is always auspicious and highly rewarding. Śrīla Prabhupāda has opened that door for everyone, but one must enter that library, eager to take full advantage of it.

Guru, Sādhū and Śāstra

sādhū-śāstra-guru-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya

Making the words of the *guru*, *sādhū*, and *śāstras* one with my heart, I constantly float and swim in the ocean of pure love. PBC, SGCP, 10

In addition to the considerations given in the previous section, in all presentations, discussions, or debates, sufficient evidence must always be provided from *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra* – the sacred triumvirate for evidence validation. Along with such evidence there must also be solid *śāstric* logic (*śāstra-yukti*), and clear unambiguous reasoning. These standards are accepted and applied by all previous *ācāryas*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed and taught these same principles.

The *paramparā* system does not allow one to deviate from the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas*. By depending upon the previous *ācāryas*, one can write beautiful commentaries. However, one cannot defy the previous *ācāryas*. CC, 3.7.134, Purport

In serious philosophical discussions there is no place for speculation, arbitrary opinions, convoluted extrapolations, or complicated twisted logic to make things fit one's biased position. Anything less than the accepted standards is questionable at best, and unacceptable otherwise.

Sādhū means he gives quotation from *śāstras*, authorized *śāstra*. He's *sādhū*. *Sādhū* will not give anything manufactured by him. No. He's not *sādhū*. *Sādhū* means whatever he'll speak, immediately he'll give evidence from the *śāstra*. *Sādhū-śāstra-guru*. And *guru* means who is following *sādhū* and *śāstra*. The *guru* who does not follow *sādhū* and *śāstra*, who does not follow Rūpa Gosvāmī, does not follow *śāstric* injunction... Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture, 10.18.1972, Vrindavan

Nowadays it has become a fashion; everyone is becoming *guru* and he is giving his own opinion, "I think.", "In my opinion." That is not *guru*. *Guru* means he should give evidences from *śāstra*. Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture, Johannesburg, 10.17.1975

As mentioned, is it not acceptable to ignore the previous *ācāryas* and focus only on what Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote or said. And especially his letters, which can *never* be used to override conclusions he presented in his books, which are his legacy. The standard he taught is *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra* – not just *guru* alone.

Failure to carefully maintain these standards will result in the gradual erosion and distortion of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, which would be a disgraceful travesty for Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission and Lord Caitanya's movement. It would be a tragic loss for humanity in the future.

Sadly, this unwanted negative trend has been festering and flourishing since Śrīla Prabhupāda left us. This treatise is a timely contribution to help reverse that dangerous trend and fortify

the standards established by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, and especially the Six Gosvāmīs – the *purva-ācāryas*.

Do the Ācāryas Disagree With One Another?

In articles, books, and in past discussions about the *jīva* fall, *rasa* inherency, and other controversial subjects, devotees often present the following argument: “Even the *ācāryas* sometimes disagree with one another.”

This supposed *argument* is then used to rationalize conflicting statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda and other *ācāryas*. Which is rather odd since, as we just read, Śrīla Prabhupāda stated repeatedly and emphatically that he would never deviate from the previous *ācāryas*, because that adherence to the *paramparā* must be maintained as sacred. Otherwise, the lineage will deviate and eventually become impotent and/or deviant. Śrīla Prabhupāda stated many times that this fidelity was a primary basis for his position as an authority.

Pursuing this weak argument, it is then asserted or implied that the previous *ācāryas* have different understandings of some core philosophical points, and thus there are conflicting *opinions* among them about these philosophical details. Therefore, it doesn’t matter if Śrīla Prabhupāda differs from them or even contradicts them. He has the *authority* to do that. His statements can somehow supersede their statements. Very strange rationalizations indeed.

Is this assertion true? Absolutely and emphatically *no*. The previous *ācāryas* most certainly do not disagree on any major philosophical points, and definitely not on any core *tattvas* or *siddhāntas*. None. And there is absolutely no disagreement among them regarding the topics discussed in this treatise.

Therefore, this is not a valid argument in the context it is always used. It is in fact employed to cover up the reality that these devotees do not have the *adhikāra* to properly reconcile Śrīla Prabhupāda's conflicting statements. It’s also very offensive to the previous *ācāryas*.

Some people have even shockingly argued that because Śrīla Prabhupāda understands the real meaning of what the previous *ācāryas* have presented, if his statements contradict them, and *śāstra* – and even Kṛṣṇa – they still stand as valid. They assert that both positions can be *inconceivably* true, even if they disagree. Besides being absurd, this is certainly not what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught. These assertions are a symptom of dangerous fanaticism, which is never good.

All that being said, there are certainly disagreements and/or different perspectives between the *ācāryas* of various *sampradayas*, and that is to be expected. Many of those differences are explored by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Jīva Gosvāmī in their commentaries and writings. In *Jaiva-dharma* Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also examined the differences between the philosophies of various Indian lineages and the philosophy of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Having cleared up this serious misconception, the most notable and sometimes cited example of disagreement among *ācāryas* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *saṁpradāya* is Jīva Gosvāmī's differing from Rūpa Gosvāmī on the matter of whether *vraja-līlā* is based on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa being in *parakīyā-rasa* or *svakīyā-rasa*., i.e., having an illicit affair or being properly married.

Jīva Gosvāmī made it clear in his commentary in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, that his position regarding *svakīyā-rasa* was just to placate a certain group of followers, i.e., a time and circumstance adjustment and tactic employed for a specific audience. Even back then, adjustments were implemented out of necessity.

After writing in support of *svakīyā-rasa*, Jīva Gosvāmī then asserted clearly that in truth he was in complete agreement with Rūpa Gosvāmī that *parakīyā-rasa* is the only mood in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's relationship in *vraja-līlā*. These details can be found in Jīva Gosvāmī's commentaries in Chapter 3 of *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

It is also important to emphasize that none of the previous *ācāryas* were enigmatic or ambiguous in their writings, like so many *jīva* fall and inherency proponents mistakenly assume, and then try to exploit with biased interpretations. Their writings are typically very straight forward, clear and concise, leaving little room for extrapolating alternative or contrary meanings, notwithstanding the complexities of some of these philosophical details.

Not surprising, since these *ācāryas* wrote their books specifically for the understanding and benefit of all serious *Vaiṣṇavas* following them in the future in pursuance of Lord Caitanya's special mercy. They weren't trying to hide or obscure any of this knowledge. Quite the contrary, as the many references provided in this treatise will clearly reveal.

All that being said, it is optimal to study these books in the association of *Vaiṣṇavas* who are well versed in these matters and genuinely advanced on the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Good guidance and on-going discussions (*kṛṣṇa-kaṭha*) are essential keys to deeper realizations and steady progress towards one's goals.

The Methodology – Our Journey

The analytical methodology of the first two parts of this treatise regarding the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* and *mukti* is straight forward. The investigation is somewhat simplified since all of the research work has already been done for our benefit, with every facet analyzed thoroughly and systematically. The section on *prīti* includes only the key references relevant to this treatise, as Jīva Gosvāmī's analysis of all related aspects of the subject is extensive and beyond the scope of this book.

Regarding the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* and *mukti*, there is a lot of incredible detail in these texts that I could try to summarize in my own words with references along the way, but that would never do justice to what has been written by these *ācāryas*. There is no possibility that I could adequately convey the details they've presented. This is an ideal opportunity, therefore, to

showcase what they have presented for our direct analysis, assimilation, and nourishment of our *bhakti*.

As such, I chose to take a unique approach for this book and present all the relevant sections with most of the longer sections abridged, presenting just the key points. I have carefully collated and presented everything systematically in a logical order to make the journey of understanding these topics more readily comprehensible.

I will comment as needed to point out important aspects and connect the related dots to bring everything together per the focus of this treatise. However, I'm not going to comment in detail on every *sūtra* or *Anuccheda*, since many of them are straight forward and self-evident.

For further emphasis, I have also underlined passages in the references that I feel should be read several times as they are key points. I also recommend that readers acquire the *Sandarbhas* with the translation and commentaries by Satyanārāyaṇa Dāsa Bābājī, for additional commentaries on each *Anuccheda*.

Besides exposing readers to these astonishing philosophical truths and related information, I especially want to showcase the personal *vani* of each of these *ācāryas*, and the gifts they have bestowed via their research and realizations. It is not hyperbole to assert that this is a veritable treasure house of priceless jewels of esoteric divine knowledge, insights, and inspiration.

After reading this book, readers will also be familiarized with the distinct writing voices of these *ācāryas*,⁵ which are permeated with their individual perspectives and personal devotional moods. It's only recently that these books have become available with acceptable English translations so this is a unique opportunity to study them directly and collectively. Their vantage points are invaluable for one's edification and spiritual progress.

This treatise was also compiled to be used as a comprehensive reference work – a compendium of these specific subjects. It is a structured study guide of these important topics, extracted directly from the source texts and organized methodically and logically. It is hoped that readers will be inspired to acquire these source books for their own libraries and further personal study.

Another important reason I've chosen to present the direct texts is to eliminate any contrary arguments about what the *ācāryas* actually wrote or meant, and thus, no one can assert that there are misrepresentations or “cherry picking” of references to support a personal bias. Instead, there are bushels of cherries! Everyone will see exactly what these *ācāryas* presented, which will easily resolve all misconceptions and confusion.

⁵ There are also *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* commentaries from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, as well as Upaniṣad commentaries by Śrī Madhvācārya, and commentaries from *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* by Sanātana Gosvāmī.

An additional practical consideration for choosing this approach is the fact that most devotees aren't generally inclined to study these texts because books like these are not typically at the top of their list of books to read, being more complex and philosophically dense than the *līlās*, or other less intense philosophical texts. Since most devotees have not studied the books of the previous *ācāryas* this is an opportunity for readers to examine these excerpts directly in the context of a guided study and analysis.

As mentioned before, in these books there are some aspects of the *jīva's svarūpa* and *mukti* where doubts are raised, and comparisons or challenges are presented with alternative perspectives from other philosophical schools and their leading *ācāryas* (*pūrva-pakṣa*). Most of those views are rejected after exposing their flaws, while some are accepted as partially correct.

These doubts and challenges will be stated as they appear in the texts. However, I've left out the details of those different views when presented, as they don't change the final conclusions and are not part of the focus or purposes of this treatise. Interested readers are encouraged to examine the full details in the *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Sandarbhās*, which are listed in the *Bibliography*.

In the second part of this treatise we will examine many details related to *mukti* – the *jīva's* realization of its *svarūpa* – its eternal spiritual nature – along with its liberation from the bondage of material existence. The section on *mukti* includes many interesting aspects not likely known to most Vaiṣṇavas, e.g., *mukti* isn't just merging into Brahman as many people mistakenly assume.

The third section on *Prīti* describes many details about *prīti* and includes a summary of the process (*abhidheya*) given by Lord Caitanya – *rāgānuga-bhakti* – by which one attains *prema-bhakti* (*prayojana*), specific to the particular relationship one desires to have with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*, in Goloka Vṛndāvana. We will examine how one's eternal identity and relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā* are realized and manifest, including how *prema* appears in the heart of the *jīva*.

Following the example in these source texts, I will discuss and expose the flaws in the current philosophical misconceptions and incorrect conclusions mentioned previously, which serves one of the important purposes of this treatise. I will do that in context when the evidence provides us with the basis for exposing and resolving these issues.

Finally, I will review some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements and translations to analyze and reconcile them with everything that has been presented up to that point from *śāstra* and the previous *ācāryas*. I will also discuss the unique circumstances surrounding his mission, which clearly contributed to his specific approach for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world outside of India.

A note about the Sanskrit. These source texts include many Sanskrit *ślokas*, usually for the *śāstric* references, and I've chosen to leave out many of those Sanskrit verses, including the cryptic Sanskrit *sūtras* of the *Brahma-sūtras*. Most readers won't be Sanskrit scholars, so they

will typically pass over those Sanskrit sections, and as such, they tend to interrupt the flow of reading and comprehension. There is still quite a bit of Sanskrit that is integral to the presentations and that is included.

Clarifying the Terminology

Before we begin the review and analysis, it's important to first clarify a few of the key terms that will be used throughout this treatise, as this is one of the core problems affecting many people, i.e., misunderstanding the actual definitions of these terms and how the *ācāryas* used them consistently in their texts. I'm going to use these terms as defined here because that is precisely how the previous *ācāryas* consistently used them.

Svarūpa

The first and primary case in point, is a core term of this treatise: *svārūpa*. Based on countless discussions I've had over the last decade with devotees trained in ISKCON (as I was in the 1970s), most of them think that *svārūpa* means our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*. Not surprising, as that is how Śrīla Prabhupāda used the term *svārūpa* more often than not.

However, this treatise is going to be somewhat technical, since that is how the *ācāryas* approached this subject in their writings, and that's how it should be when discussing the finer details of *tattvas* and *siddhāntas*. Thus, we must first understand the actual definition of the term *svārūpa* and how the previous *ācāryas* used it in their discussions and analyses.

In the context of this treatise, and the evidence provided, the word *svārūpa* literally means, *sva*: one's own, *rūpa*: form or essential nature. In other words, understanding the *jīva*'s *svārūpa* means understanding all of the inherent aspects, i.e., what exactly is a *jīva*, what is the *taṭastha-śakti*, who or what is its source, what are the attributes and characteristics intrinsic to its fundamental nature as an individual person, part of Kṛṣṇa, where and how does the *jīva* function, what are its capabilities, and so on.

That is the only contextual meaning the previous *ācāryas* ever ascribed to the term *svārūpa* in their books. In their discussions they didn't use *svārūpa* to mean, or even imply, one's eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of his eternal *līlās*, which most devotees refer to as "one's eternal *rasa*".

Svarūpa simply means the fundamental spiritual nature of the *taṭastha-śakti jīva* as an eternal living being, an atomic part (*aṁśa*) of Paramātmā – Kṛṣṇa. There are eight qualities of Brahman inherent in the *svārūpa* of the *jīva* as described in the *Brahma-sūtras* and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentaries. In addition, twenty one intrinsic qualities (*svārūpa-lakṣaṇa*) given by Śrī Jāmāṭṛ Muni from the *Padma Purāṇa*, are analyzed in detail by Jīva Gosvāmī in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

Svarūpa-siddhi

Logically, the next term to define is, *svārūpa-siddhi*, which literally means “the perfection (*siddhi*) of one’s *svārūpa*”. And what is that perfection? There are different levels of perfection (*mukti*) in that regard, but for Vaiṣṇavas in general, it is the attainment of a spiritual identity and body to facilitate an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the context of one of His unlimited *līlās* in the spiritual world, with *vraja-līlā* in Goloka Vṛndāvana being the highest attainment aspired for by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

As we will learn from carefully examining the presentations of Jīva Gosvāmī and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the *taṭastha-śakti jīva* has the *potential* and *eligibility* to attain a spiritual identity suitable for an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa and participation in His *līlās*. The fulfillment of that potential to varying degrees is the perfection (*siddhi*) of one’s *svārūpa*, and is therefore understood and described as, *svārūpa-siddhi*.

Siddha-deha

The next term, *siddha-deha*, aka, *siddha-rūpa*, aka, *siddha-śarīra*, needs clarification as well. Although this term is not directly related to the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*, it is a key element in the discussion on *mukti* and *prīti*, specifically related to the goal of *prema-bhakti* (*prayojana*) aspired for by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, and the process (*abhidheya*) given by Lord Caitanya to attain it – *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

The primary explanation of *siddha-rūpa* is found in Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Following after the inhabitants of *Vraja*, one should perform service in one’s physical body (*sādhaka-rūpa*) and in one’s *siddha* body (*siddha-rūpa*), with a desire for a particular *bhāva* [of a *Vraja* associate – *vraja-lokanusaratah*]. BRS, 1.2.295

From Jīva Gosvāmī’s commentary:

Sādhaka-rūpa refers to the physical body of the practitioner. *Siddha-rūpa* refers to the body which is suitable for one’s desired service, and which has been developed by internal meditation. (*siddha-rupena antas-cintitabhista-tat-sevopayogi-dehena*) One serves with a desire for the particular *bhāva* or *rati* of an associate of Kṛṣṇa situated in *Vraja*.

From Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s commentary:

One performs service with the *sādhaka-rūpa* – the present body – and with the *siddha-rūpa* – the body which is suitable for serving *Vraja* Kṛṣṇa in the particular type of *rati* or *bhāva* one desires, and which appears through inner contemplation, with a desire for a particular *rati* directed to one’s beloved Kṛṣṇa situated in Vṛndāvana.

There are a number of misconceptions surrounding the term *siddha-deha*, a primary one being that a *guru* can *reveal* or *give* the details of one's *siddha-deha*, implying that it is an eternally existing object, or something that the *guru* mystically knows about the disciple. This is commonly known as *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā*.

This is not what the Six Gosvāmīs taught in their books regarding one's *siddha-deha*. In the above cited commentaries it is clear that the *siddha-deha* is a “mentally conceived spiritual identity” to be employed as a key medium for one's meditations on one's desired identity and relational participation in *vraja-līlā*. This is part of the “internal practices” of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which is what is being discussed in the above verse and those that follow in the text.

The *siddha-deha* is not just a conceptual spiritual *body*. It is more than that. It is one's desired eternal *identity* to facilitate one's eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. It is the medium one must use to meditate on *mānasī-seva* during *līlā-smaraṇam*, when one is qualified of course. You cannot engage in *mānasī-seva* in the context of your material identity (*sādhaka-rūpa*). None of the *ācāryas* teach that.

Here is an excerpt from a letter written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to a disciple, taken from the book, *Prabhupāder Patrāvalī*.

...Those who say that they can teach or reveal this identity are practicing a kind of deception; it cannot be done. On the other hand, if a devotee receives some inspiration after sincerely chanting for a long time, he should go to the *sad-guru* or advanced devotees and ask for it to be confirmed and purified by them.

The spiritual identity has eleven aspects (*ekādaśa-bhāvas*). There are many cases of unscrupulous gurus who artificially force-feed these designations on unqualified practitioners, but we cannot call this the mark of spiritual perfection.

Those who have achieved the perfection of being fixed in their spiritual identity (*svarūpa-siddhi*) have attained such a realization through internal revelation, and the spiritual master's only involvement in these matters is to help the further advancement of a disciple. As a practitioner progresses toward spiritual perfection, all these things are revealed naturally within the heart that sincerely seeks service.

Therefore, when one has been blessed with the requisite intense desires (*lobha*), and has come to the stage where one knows with certainty what type of relationship with Kṛṣṇa one aspires for in *vraja-līlā*, including which *vraja-vāsi's rāga* one has chosen to follow (*anuga*), it spontaneously inspires the internal contemplation and development of one's desired identity in that context. It's not a forced or artificial thing, nor is it a type of imagining or pretending. It unfolds naturally and gradually by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and one's *gurus*.

However, we cannot possibly conceive of the true nature of the spiritual bodies in Goloka Vṛndāvana. It is beyond our capacity and experience, even with descriptions from various *līlā* books. Luckily, we don't have to. But we can mentally conceive of our desired spiritual

identity and form in basic and general terms, which is precisely the purpose of the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*: name, age, dress, form/complexion, and so on.

The *ekādaśa-bhāvas* are intended to give one a frame of reference, a set of acceptable parameters, resulting in a focal point – one’s desired identity and relationship with Kṛṣṇa – encapsulated in essence in one’s mentally conceived *siddha-deha*. It is not our final spiritual body, nor is it meant to be. That body will be awarded by Kṛṣṇa at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, and according to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, *vastu-siddhi* is when we take birth in *bhauma-līlā* and obtain our eternal *vraja-vāsī* body by being born from our *nitya-siddha gopī* mother. This will be explained in more detail in the Section on *Prīti*.

In conclusion, the *siddha-deha* is not a pre-existing object, nor is it something a *guru* can see or reveal because it doesn’t exist independently of the *jīva*. It is simply a meditational aid based on the framework of the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*, which are developed by the aspirant with the guidance of their *guru*, either *dikṣā-guru* or *śikṣā-guru(s)*, based solely on the desires of the disciple.

Anādi

The next term, *anādi*, is not complicated. It means exactly what it states, i.e., without beginning. As we will learn later on, statements like, “a long long time ago”, or, “from time immemorial”, were aspects of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s preaching, but they were not absolute *siddhānta*. Nor were those phrases ever used by any of the previous *ācāryas* to explain that term. They all used it in its literal sense.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote about beginningless *karma* in Chapter 16 of *Jaiva-dharma*.

Vrajanātha: Why have you said that *karma* is beginningless?

Bābājī: The root of all *karma* is the desire to perform *karma*, and the root cause of this desire is *avidyā* (ignorance). *Avidyā* is forgetfulness of the truth: “I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa,” and it does not have its origin in mundane time. Rather, it originates in the *taṭastha* junction of the spiritual and material worlds. That is why *karma* does not have its beginning in mundane time, and is therefore called beginningless.

This is an example of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura adjusting philosophical concepts for his specific audience. Why? Because, as we will learn, the “*taṭastha* junction” has absolutely nothing to do with the *jīva’s karma*. In fact, none of the *ācāryas* even mention a junction at all, what to speak of it being discussed as an integral aspect in any way.

The junction between the spiritual and material worlds is known as the Virajā River, or as Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura called it, the *tata*. But it has nothing whatsoever to do with the *taṭastha-śakti jīvas*. *Taṭastha-śakti jīvas* do not come from the *taṭastha* junction. Their *avidyā*

and *karma* are beginningless in the same absolute way as the *jīvas* and Kṛṣṇa are beginningless. The conditioned *taṭastha-śakti jīvas* in the material world emanate from Mahā Viṣṇu via His expansion as Paramātmā in each universe. This is explained in *Brahmā-saṁhitā*.

That master of the universe, Mahā-Viṣṇu, possesses thousands upon thousands of heads, thousands upon thousands of eyes, thousands upon thousands of arms, and thousands upon thousands of incarnations and plenary expansions. He is the Self of the cosmos, and He alone creates thousands upon thousands of living entities. BrS, 5.11

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

The form of Mahā-Viṣṇu is being described thus in the current verse beginning with the words *sahasra-śirṣā*. He whose innumerable incarnations appear in thousands upon thousands of plenary portions is called *sahasrāmśa*. Similarly, He who creates⁶ thousands upon thousands of living entities is called *sahasrasūh*. Here the word *sahasra* (one thousand) has been used to indicate an uncountable number. It is evident that the word *sahasra* is used throughout the scriptures to convey the sense of “innumerable”.

We will see clearly from the writings of the *ācāryas* that every one of them adhered to the absolute meaning of *anādi* – beginningless. That means no beginning, either in spiritual or material time frames. There was never any ambiguity about that meaning, and especially in the contexts where it is used. That fact is ubiquitous throughout their books.

Here is one of the most clear and direct examples from the *Brahma-sūtras*, where Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa reconciles the truth of beginningless *karma*.

Sūtra 35 – No divisions of karma

If you argue that in the beginning there was no division of *karma*, the answer is no, since *karmas* are without beginning. BS, 2.1.35

"The fault of inequality and cruelty is not removed by saying it is *karma* that puts *jīvas* in different bodies. Why? Because there was no distinction of *karmas*. *sad eva samyedam*: only *sat* existed, O gentle one!" Before the creation, *karma* divided up by Brahman was not visible."

This is not true. Why? Because we accept that *karma* and the *jīvas* are without beginning, like the Lord. There is no fault because later *karmas* proceed according to previous *karmas*. Smṛti says:

Viṣṇu will make *jīvas* experience the effects of piety or sin (enjoyment and suffering) according to previous *karma*. Because *karmas* are without beginning there is no inconsistency. *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*

⁶ The word “creates” should not be taken literally, since *taṭastha-śakti jīvas* have no beginning.

There is no fault of infinite regress⁷ if we say that *karma* is without beginning, because there is proof in this world (as in the case of the seed and the sprout). Nor can it be said that the Lord is not independent, since He depends on *karma* (to create bodies for the *jīvas*) for *karma*, time, and the elements are all dependent on the Lord. It is said:

O *brāhmaṇa*! The elements, *karma*, time, *svabhāva*, and the *jīva* are not different from Vāsudeva. Nothing but He exists in truth. SB, 2.5.14

Nor can one say that this is "dawn in the hut at the landing place." The Lord assigns *jīvas* their *karma* according to its condition which has no initial state. Though the Lord is capable of making its nature otherwise, He does not do that for anyone, since He is equal to all.

⁷ Infinite regress: A sequence of reasoning or justification which can never come to an end.

The Svarūpa of the Jīva

Our study of the *jīva's svarūpa* starts with the *Brahma-sūtras*, since it is a core Vedic text. It was written thousands of years ago, before Vyāsadeva wrote *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, which was his own extensive commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*. The *Brahma-sūtras* are accepted as authoritative evidence (*pramāṇa*) by all *ācāryas*.

There is a considerable level of detail and analysis provided for us in *śāstra* and by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his commentaries. Although some of the longer commentaries are abridged, the overall presentation is still extensive, and nothing relevant to the main topic has been left out. Many of these essential details will be familiar to readers who have read other Vedic literatures where some of these details have also been mentioned.

This is a comprehensive review but presented in short digestible portions for easy assimilation. Readers may find some concepts a bit challenging, albeit, intriguing. Such is the nature of these technical details.

I've used ellipses (...) at the beginning of a paragraph to indicate that some parts before that have been omitted. Because Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary flows throughout the text, I used **bold** text to help the sub-headings and *Sūtras* stand out from the rest of the commentary.

I've also highlighted key statements by underlining them. I recommend reading and contemplating those statements several times. As mentioned before, I've left out the Sanskrit for the *sūtras* and some of the references. Throughout this treatise,

Here then, are the absolute answers to the proverbial questions: Who am I? What am I – what is my nature? What is my relationship with God?

Brahma-sūtras - The Svarūpa of the Jīva

The analysis of the *jīva's svarūpa* begins in Chapter 2, Section 3, *Sūtra* 16, with the first truth establishing that the *jīva* is not created, nor does it have an origin.

Topic 11 – The Jīva

...Now the description of the *jīva* begins. *Jīva's* having an origin is also refuted.

...The doubt is this. Does the *jīva* have an origin or not?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) *Jīva* has an origin because it is understood that the universe composed of *jīvas* and matter is an effect, and if *jīvas* had no origin then the promise of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, that by knowing the Lord all things become known, would be broken (since *jīvas* would not be created from the Lord).

The *jīva* is not born because of Śruti statements and because its eternal nature is understood from Śruti and Smṛti. BS, 2.3.16

The *jīva* is not produced. Why? Because of Śruti.

The knower is not born and does not die. The *jīva* never came into being. *Jīva* is unborn, eternal, continuous, and ancient. *Jīva* is not destroyed though the body is destroyed. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.18

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad also says the *jīva* is without birth. *jñājñau dvāv ajāv īśānīśāu*: the two – the knowing Lord and the ignorant *jīva* – are unborn. It is without origin because its eternal nature is seen in Śruti and Smṛti.

The word *ca* means that *jīva*'s conscious nature is also described. *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*: the Lord is the chief eternal and the chief conscious entity. (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13) *ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yam purāṇaḥ*: the *jīva* is eternal, continuous and ancient. (BG, 2.20)

Next, the *jīva* is described as having the capacity to know, or acquire knowledge, as well as being a form of knowledge.

Topic 12 – The *Jīva* Is a Knower

Now the author discusses the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*.

It is said in Śruti, *yo vijñāne tiṣṭhan vijñānād antaro yaṁ vijñānaṁ ne veda yasya vijñānā śarīraṁ*: The *jīva* is situated in knowledge and is within knowledge, whom knowledge does not know, and who has knowledge as his body. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.22)

Śruti also says, *sukham ahaṁ svāpsaṁ na kiñcid avedīṣam*: I slept happily and did not know anything.

The doubt is this. Is the *jīva*'s *svārūpa* knowledge itself, (first Śruti quotation) or is his *svārūpa* to be a knower of knowledge (second Śruti quotation)?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) The *jīva* is knowledge itself because that is proved by the quotation from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Knowing is a quality of intelligence. By relationship with intelligence, "I slept happily" is attributed wrongly to the *jīva*.

The *jīva* is a knower because of Śruti statements. BS, 2.3.17

Jña means the *jīva*. Though the *jīva* is the form of knowledge, the *jīva*'s *svārūpa* is a knower. The word *eva* indicates that this is because of Śruti:

The *jīva* is the seer, the toucher, the hearer, the taster, the smeller, the thinker, the comprehender, the doer, and the knower. (*Praśna Upaniṣad* 4.9)

This is concluded on the strength of Śruti, not logic. Our position is *śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt*: scripture alone is the basis of all authoritative knowledge. Smṛti says *jñātā jñāna-svarūpo 'yam*: the *jīva* is a knower and has a *svarūpa* of knowledge.

One cannot say that the *jīva* is only knowledge itself, because this contradicts Śrutis stating that *jīva* is a knower. As well, the argument that the intelligence causes the conception of a knower is unproven.

The next eight *Sūtras* (18-25) give rise to a lengthy and fascinating discussion about the *jīva*'s size, with several arguments presented to determine whether the *jīva* is all-pervading or atomic. Although one might assume this would be a simple question to answer, there are many details to consider, as well as several challenges and doubts to resolve. Here are the highlights.

Topic 13 – The *Jīva*'s Coming To and Going From the Body

Now the author considers the size of the *jīva*. *eṣo 'ṇur ātmā cetasā veditavyo yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā samviveṣa*: the atomic *ātmā* in which the *prāṇa* in five forms rests is known by the mind.

The doubt is this. Is the *jīva* all-pervading or atomic?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) The *jīva* is all-pervading because Śruti says *jīva* is large and even opponents should accept this. It is called atomic figuratively for gaining an intellectual grasp.

The *jīva* is atomic because scriptures describe how the *jīva* exits and enters bodies. BS, 2.3.18

The word *aṇuḥ* (atomic) is understood here, in relation to the *pūrva-pakṣa sūtra* in 2.3.20. The possessive case has an ablative meaning (because of entering). The *jīva* is atomic, not all-pervading. Why? Because it leaves and enters the body.

A point in his heart lights up. By that light, the *jīva* leaves through the eyes, head or other parts of the body. *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.2

...Having attained the end of his *karmas* that he did on this Earth, from that world he comes to this world of *karma*. *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.6

The *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* describes the *jīva*'s exiting and entering the body. All this would be impossible if the *jīva* were all-pervading (since he would be everywhere already).

...“Though all-pervading and thus without movement, the *jīva*’s leaving the body can mean that he just gives up bodily conceptions just as a ruler gives up ownership of a village. Thus ‘going and coming’ is possible for a nonmoving *jīva*.”

The *jīva*’s coming and going is not figurative because going and coming refer to the *jīva*’s actions. BS, 2.3.19

The word *ca* is for emphasis. A relationship is expressed of going and coming with the *ātmā*, because action is situated in an agent. Since the *jīva* is the agent and the action is real, one must accept that the *jīva* leaves the body. This is concluded by the Śruti which says, *tena pradyotena*: the *jīva* leaves by a ray of light. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.2)

Whenever the *jīva* accepts or leaves a body, he takes these senses with him in the subtle body, just as air takes fragrances from objects and goes elsewhere. BG, 15.8

...The senses actually leave secondarily, and the *jīva* actually leaves primarily. The senses cannot leave figuratively since they cannot give up an identity. And this figurative meaning would be inconsistent with the *Gītā* statement of the *ātmā* taking with it the senses and leaving the body.

In this way the theory of *jīva* and Brahman being like air in a pot and the air in the sky separated by false identity (and thus the theory that the *jīva*, being Brahman, is all-pervading and only has a false idea of leaving the body) is refuted as a childish argument.

If you argue that the *jīva* is not atomic because of the statement that it is large, the answer is no, because the *ātmā* described as large is actually *Paramātmā* by context. BS, 2.3.20

The *jīva* is not atomic because *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says the opposite: it is great in size. *sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmā*: the *ātmā* is great.

This is not so. Why? Because this statement refers to *Paramātmā*, which is the subject of discussion in that text. The topic starts with a description of the *jīva*. *yo 'yaṁ vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu*: the *jīva* consisting of knowledge is surrounded by the *prāṇas*.

In the middle of the passage however the topic is not the *jīva* but the Supreme Lord, since it describes His greatness, such as *yasyānuvittaḥ pratibuddha ātmā*: knowing Him, one becomes enlightened.

And because of two texts with words which describe the *jīva* as atomic, [it can be concluded that] the *jīva* must be atomic. BS, 2.3.21

The word indicating atomic is stated in the scriptures. *eṣo ṇur ātmā*: the *ātmā* is atomic. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.9) It is compared in size to an atom. To describe the *jīva*, it is compared in size to something else.

The *jīva* is known to be a hundredth part of a hundredth part of the tip of a hair and is qualified for liberation. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.9

These two texts show that the *jīva* is atomic. *Ānanta* refers to liberation – not being subject to death.

"If the *jīva* is atomic, it could not spread throughout the body."

There is no contradiction because the *jīva* can spread throughout the body like sandalwood. BS, 2.3.22

A drop of sandalwood oil placed in one part of the body gives joy to the whole body. Similarly, the *jīva* can spread its awareness throughout the body.

Smṛti says: Just as a drop of sandalwood oil spreads throughout the body, the atomic *jīva* spreads throughout the body and remains there. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa sūtra*

If you argue that the sandalwood spreads because it is located in one place in the body but the *ātmā* does not have a particular location in the body from which to spread, the answer is no, for the *ātmā* is situated in the heart. BS, 2.3.23

"It is seen that a drop of sandalwood is situated in a particular place on the body (from which to spread out). But the *jīva* is not seen nor inferred to be situated in a particular place. Using the example of sandalwood is therefore not appropriate. So one can infer that the *ātmā*, because it is all-pervading, spreads throughout the body like ether."

That is not true. Why? Because we accept descriptions that the *jīva* has a particular location in one place in the body. "Where does the *jīva* reside?" In the heart. *hṛdi hy eṣa ātmā*: the *ātmā* is in the heart. (*Praśna Upaniṣad* 3.6)

Though the *jīva* is proven to be atomic there is no contradiction to its spreading throughout the body. The author (Śrīla Vyāsadeva) gives the best opinion.

The *jīva* spreads throughout the body because of its quality of consciousness, just as the sun spreads its light in the sky. BS, 2.3.24

Though the *jīva* is atomic, it spreads throughout the whole body because of its quality of consciousness, because the *jīva* is endowed with consciousness, just as the sun or another body spreads all over the sky by its light.

The Lord Himself says this: Just as one sun lights up the whole world, this *ātmā* illuminates the whole body, O descendent of Bhārata. BG, 13.34

...The manifestation of a quality in a place devoid of that quality was explained. This is made clear by an example.

***Jīva* spreads consciousness just as fragrance spreads to a place without fragrance. The Upaniṣads show this. BS, 2.3.25**

Just as the flower's quality of fragrance manifests in a place without fragrance, the *jīva*'s quality of consciousness manifests in places outside the heart such as the head and feet. The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* shows this: the *jīva*, having taken possession of the body by consciousness, experiences happiness and pain.

Though fragrance spreads far, it is not separate from its source, just as the light of a gem is not separate from the gem.

It's interesting to note how many counter arguments were made which had to be defeated with the correct understanding. All of the evidence came from *śāstra*. Challenging and resolving misconceptions is clearly a constant necessity, as revealed in these commentaries from several hundred years ago.

The next four *sūtras* (26-29) deal with aspects of the *jīva*'s *svārūpa* related to inherent knowledge and being a knower.

Topic 14 – Other Statements Concerning the *Jīva*

It is said that the *jīva* is the seer. Here is the doubt. Is the knowledge which is manifest as a quality of the *jīva* eternal or temporary?

Knowledge in the *jīva* is eternal because of teachings in the scriptures, other than the statement that the *ātmā* is a seer. BS, 2.3.26

Knowledge as a quality of the *jīva* is eternal. Why? Because other than the statement that the *jīva* is the seer, there are teachings of the *jīva* having eternal knowledge, in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.14, *avināśī vā are 'yam ātmānucchitti-dharmā*: the *jīva* is indestructible and has indestructible qualities.

Knowledge does not arise in the *jīva* by contact with the mind, because contact cannot take place between two items having no parts. This knowledge becomes covered by turning away from the Lord and it manifests by turning towards the Lord when aversion towards Him is destroyed.

Smṛti says:

Just as light is not created in a jewel by washing away dirt, so knowledge is not created in the *jīva* by destroying faults.

Just as water is not created by digging a well, an existing thing simply becomes manifest. How can something not existing appear?

Similarly, by destruction of bad qualities, the obscured qualities, which are eternal in the *ātmā*, manifest. They are not created. *Viṣṇu-dharma*

The meaning of the Śruti statement *yo vijñāne tiṣṭhati* is explained.

As strange as it may seem, some inherency advocates have used the above *sūtra* and last part of the commentary from Smṛti as evidence that the *jīva*'s spiritual form and relationship with Kṛṣṇa are inherent in its *svarūpa*. But clearly, that is not at all the intended meaning of this *sūtra* and commentary.

It is just discussing the *jīva* being a knower and having knowledge, both of which are intrinsic aspects of the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*, meaning they are not something *attained* by the *jīva*. They are inherent qualities and they manifest automatically when the *jīva* attains *mukti*, as we will learn in the section on *mukti*. Very straight forward when read in the proper context. It has absolutely nothing to do with the *jīva*'s personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

This is a good example of extrapolating evidence beyond the intended meaning, due to not studying all of this section carefully, and just cherry picking sections which *seem* to validate one's biased misconceptions. It should be quite evident that this is not even close to being a valid argument, nor appropriate evidence for the inherency of one's *rasa* in one's *svarūpa*.

The next *sūtras* further confirm that this section has nothing to do with the inherency of one's *rasa* with Kṛṣṇa.

The *jīva* is knowledge itself, just as the Lord is so designated, because the quality of knowledge is His essence. BS, 2.3.27

Though the *jīva* is a knower, it is designated as knowledge itself (*jñāna-svarūpa*). Why? Because it has the quality of knowledge as its essence. "Essence" means that which, without any modification, defines an object's very nature.

For example, the Lord who is omniscient, whose omniscience is described by statements like, *yaḥ sarvajñah sarvavit* (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*), is designated as the essence of knowledge, *jñāna-svarūpa*, in statements like, *satyaṁ jñānam*. Similarly, the *jīva*, a knower, is designated as knowledge itself.

Having shown that the *jīva* is both a knower and knowledge, the author speaks again.

It is not a fault that the *jīva* is both knower and knowledge itself, since these exist with the *jīva* eternally. This is seen in the case of the sun also, which is both light and illuminator. BS, 2.328

It is not a fault that the *jīva*, who is knowledge itself, is also designated as the knower. Why? It is not contrary because it is seen that the condition of being both a knower and knowledge coexists with *ātmā* as long as it exists.

It is acknowledged that the *ātmā* exists without beginning or end in time. This is understood from seeing that the sun, though a form of light, gives off light. (Similarly, the *ātmā*, a form of knowledge, also knows, or is a knower.) As long as the sun exists, these designations (as light and illuminator) are to be given. The wise say that though there is one object, there is an appearance of it being two objects because of the principle of *viśeṣa*.

You cannot say that the *jīva*'s knowledge is not eternal, because it exists during deep sleep and simply manifests on waking. It is like maleness which is unmanifest in a child but appears when he grows up. BS, 2.3.29

The word *tu* indicates refutation of the doubt. The word *na* is understood from the previous *sūtra*. If you say that knowledge is absent during deep sleep and is created on waking, the answer is no.

Why? Because the knowledge exists during deep sleep and simply manifests on waking. An example is given. It is like being a man. Though maleness is present with the *jīva* during childhood, it manifests only during adolescence.

...If knowledge did not exist during deep sleep, it could not manifest later, just as a eunuch cannot manifest maleness later on if maleness were not present in him in an unmanifest state. Thus it is proved that the atomic *jīva*, the form of knowledge, has knowledge (awareness) as his eternal attribute.

When it is stated that the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is knowledge, it does not mean the *jīva* possesses all knowledge like Kṛṣṇa, who is omniscient. The *jīva* is a knower as well which means it is conscious and aware, and can thus acquire knowledge of various types such as knowledge of physical objects and subtle mental concepts. In the conditioned state, the *jīva* acquires knowledge through the agency of the senses and mind, but it is only the *jīva* who is the conscious knower and possessor of knowledge.

The next Topic explains again that the *jīva* is not all pervading, as speculated by Sāṅkhya philosophers. Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly exposed the flaws of impersonalism in many of his purports and lectures. In this commentary, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains the flaws and contradictions from various angles with simple logic.

Topic 15 – The Jīva's Being Eternally Aware and Unaware

Now the author refutes the opposing views of Sāṅkhya philosophers. Is it proper or not to say that the *ātmā* is knowledge alone and all-pervading?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It is correct to say that the *jīva* is all-pervading because its effects are realized everywhere. If the *jīva* were atomic, it could not experience happiness and suffering in all its limbs. If the *jīva* were of medium size, it would not be eternal, and *karmas* due to it would be destroyed, while undeserved *karmas* would be received (since *jīva* would be too big for some bodies and too small for others).

The proposition of an all-pervading *jīva* would mean that it would be eternally aware and unaware; or eternally aware; or eternally unaware. BS, 2.3.30

According to the idea that *jīva* is knowledge alone, all-pervading, it would mean that there would be eternal awareness and unawareness concerning objects, or there would be a restriction of one or the other.

The meaning is this. It is observed in the world that there is awareness and lack of awareness. If the *ātmā*, being consciousness alone, and all-pervading, were the cause of these two, they should eternally exist simultaneously, and this would be perceived by all people.

If the *ātmā* were the cause of only awareness and not unawareness, unawareness would not exist anywhere in anyone. If the *ātmā* were the cause of only unawareness, then awareness would not exist anywhere in anyone. One cannot say that awareness and unawareness depend on contact with the senses, since the all-pervading *ātmā* would always be in contact with all the senses.

Moreover, according to this idea, since all *ātmās* are all-pervading, they would contact all bodies. Thus, they would obtain all enjoyment (and suffering) of all bodies. The proposition that enjoyment comes from individual *karma*, and individual *karma* comes from individual desires, will be defeated (by the fact that the all-pervading *ātmā* would have all desires of all other *ātmās*.) In other philosophies (those of Gautama and Kaṇāda) there is a similar fault.

But there is no fault in our philosophy because in it, the atomic *jīva* is different in each body. Since the *jīva* is atomic, it exists and experiences everywhere but with results experienced sequentially, not simultaneously. Thus this proposition is faultless. The *jīva* experiences happiness or suffering in all limbs because it spreads out by its quality of consciousness.

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in the *Gītā* that the conditioned *jīva* thinks it is the doer of actions, but it is in fact *prakṛti* that is the agent. However, it's not quite that simple as we will see in the following extensive analysis covering ten *Sūtras* (31-40), discussing this important aspect of

the *jīva's svarūpa*. As usual, I have underlined key parts to contemplate. Here are the highlights.

Topic 16 – *The Jīva As a Doer*

Now, the following text is discussed. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says, *vijñānam yajñam tanute karmāṇi tanute 'pi ca*: knowledge performs sacrifice and performs actions.

The doubt is this. Is the *jīva* who is knowledge, the doer (agent) or not?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) The following Śruti denies that *jīva* is an agent. The *jīva* cannot be an agent. *Prakṛti* is the agent.

One who thinks the *jīva* is the killer, and one who thinks that he is killed, both do not know. The *jīva* does not kill nor is killed. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.19

Smṛtis also confirm this:

The person bewildered by pride thinks that he is the doer of actions which are being done completely by the body, senses, and *prāṇas*, made of *prakṛti*. BG, 3.27

Prakṛti is said to be a cause, instrumental in producing the body and senses. The *jīva* is said to be a cause, being the enjoyer of happiness and distress. BG, 13.21

Therefore the *jīva* is not the doer or agent. It is *prakṛti*. This is understood from discerning the truth. The *jīva* falsely attributes himself to be the agent and becomes the enjoyer of the fruits of his actions.

This argument is refuted in the following *sūtra*.

The *jīva* is the agent, because this gives meaning to the scriptures. BS, 2.3.31

The *jīva* is the agent, not the *guṇas*. Why? Because only the *jīva's* being an agent gives meaning to scriptural injunctions.

...Scriptures have meaning only if we accept a conscious agent. They would be meaningless if the *guṇas* were the agent. The scriptures inspire the intellect by promising results and engaging the person in action to enjoy the result. They cannot inspire the intellect of insentient *guṇas*. The *jīva* is actually the agent.

The *jīva* is the agent because the scriptures describe that even the liberated *jīva* plays. BS, 2.3.32

The *jīva* is the agent because the scriptures describe that even the liberated *jīva* plays. *sa tatra paryeti jakṣan kṛīḍan ramamāṇaḥ*: in the spiritual world the *jīva* moves, laughs, plays,

and enjoys. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.3) There, though the *jīva* is an agent, the action does not accrue suffering. Here, the agent related to the *guṇas* accrues suffering since he has made his *svārūpa* debilitated.

The *jīva* is the agent because he is so described in the scriptures. BS, 2.3.33

In the Śruti it is said: Like a king moves with his subjects in his kingdom, the *ātmā*, taking the *prāṇas* with him, moves about in his body. *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 2.1.18

Whenever the *jīva* accepts or leaves a body, he takes these senses with him in the subtle body, just as air takes fragrances from objects and goes elsewhere. BG, 15.8

These texts indicate that the *jīva* is the agent and the *prāṇas* are used by him. The conscious *jīva* is the agent, just as a magnet is the agent that draws iron. In grasping objects, the *prāṇas* (and senses) are the cause, but none other than the *jīva* is the grasper of the *prāṇa*.

The *jīva* is an agent because he is designated as such in actions. If it were not so, the sentence would be constructed differently. BS, 2.3.34

viññānam yajñam tanute: the intelligence (*jīva*) performs sacrifice. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.5) The *jīva* is the agent because of this teaching, with the *jīva* as the chief agent in actions both Vedic and secular. If the word *viññānam* did not mean the *jīva*, but rather the intelligence, it would be stated differently.

..."If the *jīva* were an agent, its creations would be beneficial for itself and not un-beneficial for itself, since it is an independent agent."

That is not so. Though the *jīva* desires to produce something beneficial, sometimes he performs un-beneficial acts because of various *karmas* accompanying him.

Therefore it can be concluded that the *jīva* is an agent. That being so, when the scriptures talk of the *jīva* not being an agent, it simply means that the *jīva* is not independent in his actions.

***Prakṛti* cannot be the agent, since there would be unrestricted experience in all humans, since *prakṛti* is all-pervading. BS, 2.3.35**

It was previously shown that if the *jīva* were all-pervading, awareness would be unrestricted. Similarly, because *prakṛti* is all-pervading and thus common to all humans, actions would not be restricted to an individual. All actions would be for all to enjoy, or one person not acting would mean no *jīva* would enjoy.

If *prakṛti* were the agent, then there would be a reversal of the capacity to enjoy; it would have to be taken from the *jīva* and given to *prakṛti*. BS, 2.3.36

If *prakṛti* were the agent, there would be a reversal of the capacity of being the enjoyer, which is fixed in the *jīva*. It would mean that *prakṛti* should be the enjoyer of its acts. But this would contradict the Sāṅkhya doctrine, *puruṣa' asti bhoktr-bhāvāt*: the *jīva* exists because it is an enjoyer. (*Sāṅkhya-kārikā* 27)

Since it is impossible for the enjoyer to be anyone other than the performer of the act, one must accept that the capacity to enjoy would reside in *prakṛti* if *prakṛti* is the agent.

***Prakṛti* cannot be the agent because then there could be no *samādhi* – the conception of being different from *prakṛti*.** BS, 2.3.37

The doctrine of *prakṛti* as the agent is useless because then there could be no *samādhi*, the goal of liberation. *Samādhi* means understanding, “I am different from *prakṛti*”. That would not be possible because it would be impossible to separate oneself from oneself (*prakṛti* the agent from *prakṛti*) and because *prakṛti* is insentient, incapable of thinking such a thing. Therefore it is proved that the *jīva* is the agent.

The author shows by example that the *jīva* is the agent by its own *śakti*, assisted by its instruments.

Like a carpenter, the *jīva* is the doer in two ways. BS, 2.3.38

The carpenter, in doing his carpentry, is an agent in two ways – by using his own *śakti* in holding his axe, and through the instruments like the axe. The *jīva* is the agent by his own *śakti* in grasping the *prāṇas* and by using the *prāṇas* to grasp other things. Though the action originates from the pure *jīva*, it is said figuratively that the material body is the agent because of the strong influence of the *guṇas*.

Thus it is said: The *jīva*, identifying with *prakṛti* in the form of his body, experiences happiness and distress which are born from *prakṛti*, by taking birth in various bodies of *devatās* and animals. This is caused by his desires for objects made of the *guṇas*. BG, 13.22

This explains why there are statements in scripture calling the *guṇas* the agent. One who sees the *jīva* as the sole agent is called a fool (BG, 3.27) because, though action depends on five factors, the person thinks of himself as the only factor. One cannot take a superficial meaning of these statements, since such a meaning would contradict the statements concerning *jīva*'s methods of action for liberation in the same work.

...The experience of enjoyment or suffering belongs to the pure *jīva*. Smṛti says: The *jīva* is said to be a cause, being the enjoyer of happiness and distress. BG, 13.21

Although the perception of the jīva takes place when in association with the guṇas, the jīva, which has a conscious form, takes prominence, not the guṇas, because it is contrary to the guṇas' nature to be the enjoyer (being insentient). The jīva's desire to be an enjoyer becomes the cause of its experience of happiness and distress because it has self-awareness as its nature.

Therefore it can be concluded that the jīva is the agent with the help of the guṇas and by its own śakti. The Śruti also says, *eṣa hi draṣṭā spraṣṭā śrotā*: the jīva is the seer, the toucher, the hearer. Using the example of the carpenter, the idea that the jīva is a perpetual agent is refuted (since he decides when to work).

Another doubt arises in relation to this. Is the jīva's agency independent or dependent?

(Pūrva-pakṣa) The jīva is an independent agent since injunctions and prohibitions in the scripture take on meaning if this is true. Examples are as follows. *svarga-kāmo yajeta*: a person desiring svarga should perform sacrifice. (Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra, Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda, 10.2.1) *tasmād brāhmaṇaḥ surāṁ na pibet pāpmanotsamsrja*: therefore the brāhmaṇa should not drink liquor and not commit sin. He who is ordered by scriptures is he who can perform or not perform the action using his own intelligence.

The jīva's ability as an agent arises from the Supreme Lord, since this is stated in the Śruti. BS, 2.3.39

The word *tu* indicates a refutation of the doubt. The jīva's ability to act arises from the Supreme Lord. Why? Because Śruti says so.

antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śāstā janānām: the controller has entered within all people. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1.10)

ya ātmani tiṣṭhann ātmānam antaro yamayati: He who resides in the jīva controls the jīva from within. (Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.22)

eṣa eva sādhu karma kārayati: the Lord makes the jīva perform good actions. (Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad 3.8)

Let that be. If the jīva's agency depends on the Supreme Lord, then the injunctions and prohibitions (for humans) in scriptures would be useless, since the scriptures apply to a person who can do or not do according to his intelligence.

No, because the Lord acts after considering the jīva's efforts, the injunctions and prohibitions are not useless, and the Lord is not liable to the charge of cruelty. BS, 2.3.40

The word *tu* indicates refutation of the doubt. Considering the effort that the *jīva* makes in terms of *dharma* and *adharma*, the Supreme Lord makes him act. Therefore the fault raised does not apply. And because of the differences in *dharma* and *adharma* in the acts *jīva*, the Lord, being the efficient cause only, gives different results just as rain gives different fruits to different trees.

...Therefore, it can be concluded that the Lord considers the actions of the *jīvas* and gives good or bad results. Moreover, though the *jīva* as agent acts under the inspiration from the Lord, the agency of the *jīva* is not removed.

...If the Supreme Lord ordered the *jīva* as if he were a piece of stone, the authority of the Lord's words would be destroyed, since the words would be directed to something most inferior.

It is said, "Wishing to lead the *jīva* up, the Lord makes him do good actions." This expresses the Lord's mercy. "Wishing to lead the *jīva* down, the Lord makes him do bad actions." expresses the Lord's punishment.

However, that mercy and punishment cannot be applied to a *jīva* who is like a stone because that would make the fault of cruelty on the part of the Lord unavoidable. Therefore it can be concluded that the *jīva* is the dependent agent and the Lord is the causal agent. Without the Lord's permission the *jīva* cannot act. Thus everything is clear.

In the following three *sūtras* (41-43) there is a discussion about the *jīva* being a part (*aṁśa*) of Paramātmā. Take note that the eternal relationship between the *jīva* and Kṛṣṇa is never identified as a *līlā* based relationship. It is always expressed in more technical terms, as a fundamental existential connection, i.e., like the relationship between the sun and its rays.

Topic 17 – *Jīva* As an *Aṁśa*

To strengthen the previous conclusion, *jīva* is described as an *aṁśa* of Brahman.

In Śruti it is said, *dvā suparṇā*: there are two birds in a tree (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.1) It appears that one is the Lord and the other is the *jīva*.

The doubt is this. Is the *jīva* the Lord Himself, limited by *māyā*? Or, is the *jīva* an *aṁśa* of the Lord, like the ray of the sun, separate from the Lord, depending on his relationship to the Lord? What is the conclusion?

The *jīva* is a part of the Lord because of many scriptural statements. Other statements giving descriptions of oneness of *jīva* and the Lord, such as the fisherman and the gambler being Brahman, are also taught. But they do not indicate absolute oneness. BS, 2.3.41

The *jīva* is an *aṁśa* of the Lord, just as a ray of the sun is different from the sun, follows after it, and is dependent on its relationship to the sun. “Why?” Because of many statements in Śruti and Smṛti.

One Lord Nārāyaṇa is creation and destruction. Nārāyaṇa is the mother, the father, the brother, the abode, the shelter, the friend, and the goal. *Subāla Upaniṣad* 6

I am the method to attain the goal, the master, the controller, the witness, the abode, the shelter, and the friend. BG, 9.18

These statements teach various relationships: creator and created, controller and controlled, support and supported, master and servant, friend and object of friendship, the object of attainment and the attainer.

...Thus the *jīva*, being different from the Lord, having a relationship as the created, etc., is called the Lord's *aṁśa* or part because of being subordinate to the Lord. This condition is accomplished because the *jīva* is the *śakti* of the Lord. *viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā*: the Lord has a superior energy, another energy called the *jīva*. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

This does not contradict the definition of *aṁśa* being a part of one substance. Brahman, possessor of *śaktis*, is one substance. The *śakti* of Brahman is the *jīva*. *Jīva* is an *aṁśa* of Brahman because it is a part of Brahman (being His *śakti*). Thus the *jīva*'s subordination to Brahman is established.

...Thus, because of deducing the qualities of controller and controlled, all-pervading and atomic size in the Lord and the *jīva*, it can be concluded that there is difference between the *jīva* and the Lord. This cannot be known from sense perception. It is known only by scripture.

The author quotes from the Vedas.

The *jīva* is an *aṁśa* because this is stated in a Vedic *mantra*. BS, 2.3.42

pādo 'sya viśvā bhūtāni: All beings are one quarter (*aṁśa*) of Viṣṇu. (*Rg Veda* 10.90.3) This wording of the *mantra* says that the *jīva* is an *aṁśa* of Brahman. The word *pāda* is synonymous with *aṁśa*. In this Vedic *mantra*, the plural *sarva-bhūtāni* is used (to indicate that there are many *jīvas*) whereas the word *aṁśa* is in the singular in the previous *sūtra* to indicate a class. This is the case in other texts as well.

Smṛtis also confirm this. BS, 2.3.43

The *jīvas* are My part, and eternal in the world of *jīvas*. BG, 15.7

By saying that the *jīva* is eternal, the Lord refutes the idea that the *jīva* arises as an *upādhi*⁸ – Brahman under limiting conditions. Thus, it can be concluded that the *jīva* is an *aṁśa* of the Lord, dependent on a relationship with Him. His role as an agent is dependent on the Lord.

The Smṛtis also give details of the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*:

The *jīva* is knowledge itself, has the quality of knowledge, is conscious, is superior to *prakṛti*, is not born, does not change, is similar to others of its class, and has its individual form.

The *jīva* is atomic, eternal, pervasive, composed of knowledge and bliss, has a sense of “I”, does not diminish, is a witness, is separate from other *jīvas*, and is permanent.

The *jīva* cannot be burned, cannot be cut, cannot be moistened, cannot be dried up, cannot be destroyed. The *jīva* is endowed with these and other qualities. It is an *aṁśa*, a servant of the Lord.

The syllable *ma* of *om* denotes the *jīva*, who knows his body, and is always dependent on the Lord. The *jīva* is a servant of the Lord and of no one else ever. *Padma Purāṇa Uttara-khaṇḍa* 226.34-37⁹

The phrase *evam-ādi-guṇaiḥ* (endowed thus with other qualities) means that the *jīva* is also the agent, enjoyer, and self-luminous (aware of himself).

...A flame reveals the eye and reveals its own form by itself. It is not like the illumination of a pot, which depends on the flame to reveal its form. Thus, the flame illuminates itself, or is self-illuminating. However, the flame does not reveal itself to itself. (It is not aware of itself, but reveals its form to a person with consciousness), since it is unconscious of itself.

Ātmā reveals others and also reveals itself to itself. Therefore, that which reveals itself to itself is the *ātmā*, which is *cid-rūpa*, a form of consciousness.

Now there is a short digression from the main topic (*sūtras* 44-48), where there is a detailed refutation of the notion that Kṛṣṇa's *avatāras*, being His *amsas*, are the same as the *jīvās*, who are also His *amsas*. Those *sūtras* and commentary are not directly relevant to this topic so they are not included. Here is the conclusion from Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary to *Sūtra* 48:

⁸ An *upādhi*, or adjunct, is that which does not belong to the essential nature of an entity or object but is external to it. However, because the adjunct is somehow superimposed onto the object, the object comes to be identified with it. For example, a red color reflecting in a crystal is not part of the crystal but only appears to be so.

⁹ These four verses from *Padma Purāṇa*, and their paraphrasing by Jāmāṭṛ Muni, are the basis for Jīva Gosvāmī's analysis of the *svārūpa* of the *jīva* in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

Topic 18 – The Nature of Matsya and Other Avatāras

...Thus the word *aṁśa* applied to *avatāras* like Matsya, refers to the Lord in a form not manifesting all the qualities. On the other hand, the same word applied to the *jīva* refers to his dependence on the Lord.

Finishing this Section, in *sūtras* 49-51 there is a short discussion about the differences between *jīvas* due to their *karma*. Note that there is no indication of any differences between each *jīva's svarūpa*, since their *svarūpas* are said to be exactly the same.

Topic 19 – Difference In *Karma*

Having completed the digression, the author considers the main topic of the *jīva*.

Such statements as the following are found in the Upaniṣads like *Kaṭha*:

nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān

The Lord is the chief eternal among eternal, and the chief conscious being among conscious beings. The one fulfills the desires of many. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13

In the passage, it says that there are many *jīvas* with eternal consciousness. The doubt is this. Are all of them same (in their experience)?

All *jīvas* are not the same because of differences in *karma*. BS, 2.3.49

The word *na* is understood from *sūtra* 2.3.44. The *jīvas* are not all the same (in their experience). Why? Though their *svarūpa* is the same, they are not the same because they are having different *karmas*. Their *karma* is without beginning (*anādi*).

One may argue that the differences occur because of difference in desires and hatreds. This is refuted in the next *sūtra*.

Though desires and some temporary differences may be accepted as a cause, they must also have a cause. BS, 2.3.50

Though the desires and hatreds are accepted as causes for variety in *jīvas*, these desires and hatreds arise from *karma* alone, since one must find a cause of those desires and hatreds. The word *ca* indicates that this includes the temporary differences as well.

"The *jīvas* have variety because of being in different places such as *svarga* or earth."

If one proposes that difference in place gives rise to variety in *jīvas*, the answer is no, because attaining those places depends on *karma*. BS, 2.3.51

The answer is no, because attaining different places is included in *karma*, since attaining those particular places depends on *karma*. One also sees variety in *jīvas* who are in the same place.

The actions (*karma*) of the *jīvas* are manifestations of the different ways each *jīva* uses their innate capacity for desire and being a doer and enjoyer, and that is how their uniqueness is expressed and observed. The *jīva*'s uniqueness is rooted in their individual sense of “I-ness”, i.e., each *jīva* is an individual person.

In other words, all *jīvas* are exactly the same in every way except for one – they are each unique individual persons. This is an important distinction to comprehend. It is not due to each *jīva* having a unique *svarūpa*, since Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa made it clear that all *jīvas* have the same exact fundamental nature – *svarūpa*. Differences between *jīvas* are due to the unique ways they utilize their inherent faculties in the context of conditioned life. It is not because they have different *svarūpas*.

This is the end of Section 3 in Chapter 2 of the *Brahma-sūtras*, the first section describing the inherent attributes of the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*. Let's review what has been presented so far. Since most of the aspects discussed were straight forward and self evident, there is no need to reiterate or elaborate further on those details.

But we should take note that in presenting these explicit details about the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*, not one single statement was made, or even implied, that the *jīva* has a predetermined relationship (*rasa*) with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās* in the spiritual world. And there was certainly no indication that it is an inherent aspect of each *jīva*'s *svarūpa*.

Nor was it stated that *bhakti* or *prema* are inherent in the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*. Not surprising since *bhakti* and *prema* are direct manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*, and it was never stated that those *śaktis* are in a dormant state inherent in the *svarūpa* of the *jīvas*, who are *taṭastha-śakti*. *Svarūpa-śakti* can never be covered by *taṭastha-śakti*, nor can it be in a dormant state. *Bhakti* and *prema* are eternally dynamic and eternally perfect – *nitya-siddha*.

On the other hand, we also understand that the *jīva* is by constitution an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa: *jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa* (CC, 2.20.108). This is the essence of *sambandha* – our eternal relational connection with Kṛṣṇa. But how can the *jīva* be understood as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa without possessing inherent *bhakti*?

The answer is this. The statement that the *jīva* is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa does not imply a pre-existing or current active relationship with Kṛṣṇa based on *bhakti*. It is simply a statement about the *constitutional nature* of the *jīva*'s eternal *connection* and existential *function* related to Kṛṣṇa, namely, master and servant.

For *nitya-baddha jīvas* this eternal constitutional relationship directly indicates the *potential* for a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and being a *dormant potential*, it must first be activated by receiving the seed of *bhakti* (*bhakti-latā-bīja*) from a devotee who possesses *bhakti*. That

gift of *bhakti* has to then be developed to its full potential, or to the extent that each *jīva* is capable of in the course of their spiritual development over many lifetimes.

To be very clear and succinct, in its essence, the *jīva* has an inherent dormant potential for a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Nothing more – only *possibilities*. The *jīvas*, being *taṭastha-śakti*, and by constitution, eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, are therefore fully *eligible* to take that *potential* to its highest limits – a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*. The choice is up to each *jīva*, as expressed in their *sādhana*, to attain whatever level of *mukti* or direct connection with Kṛṣṇa they are inclined towards, and thus aspiring for.

Proponents of the inherency of the *jīva's rasa* often argue using the analogy that each *jīva* is a unique seed, and like all seeds, when they fructify, they produce different plants and fruits. There is another variation of the seed analogy. The argument is made that acorns from one tree are all essentially the same, being made of the same biological ingredients and structure, but in spite of that sameness, they will each produce an oak tree with unique characteristics. The trees will never be identical.

The argument concludes that since each acorn has the unique DNA blueprint of the potential tree it can manifest, in the same way, each *jīva* has a unique predetermined relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His unlimited *līlās* as an inherent aspect of their *svarūpa*.

But we saw that there were no such statements or analogies about the *jīva's svarūpa* having the unique seed of a dormant *līlā* based relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Nor was there any mention of a unique DNA-like attribute in the *jīva's svarūpa* which would result in the *jīva* being inclined to a particular type of relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās*.

On the contrary, this is what was clearly stated: All *jīvas* are not the same because of differences in *karma*. BS, 2.3.49. And Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa confirms this in his commentary: “Why? Though their *svarūpa* is the same, they are not the same because they are having different *karmas*. Their *karma* is without beginning (*anādi*).”

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa made the explicit point that, “their *svarūpa* is the same”, i.e., they are not unique seeds of different types. Just *potential* that is unleashed in the conditioned state through desires and *karma*, i.e., free will induced action. The exploration of that inherent potential over the course of unlimited lifetimes is how those differences manifest in the material world. That same potential can be redirected by desires focused on a specific relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

When the *jīva* receives the seed of *bhakti*, that seed will be cultivated and nourished in unique ways by each *jīva* according to their association and resultant evolving desires, and it will ultimately manifest as a unique relationship with Kṛṣṇa. This understanding is a more accurate application of the “unique seed” analogy.

In Jīva Gosvāmī's *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, which is the next section of our study, we'll examine a lengthy discussion about each *jīva* having a unique sense of “I”, i.e., a sense of being a unique individual person, distinct from other *jīvas*. As we will see, there is also no mention in

that discussion of an inherent relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or that the sense of “I” indicates a particular type of relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās*.

If each *jīva* had a dormant seed of a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, this would have been the obvious place to reveal this critically important detail. But that possibility wasn't even mentioned as the basis for the differences between each unique *jīva*. Neither is it mentioned in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

All that being said, there are still more details to examine. In Chapter 4, Section 4 of the *Brahma-sūtras* the main topic is the manifestation of the *jīva's svarūpa* upon attaining *mukti*. In that section there is a discussion about the eight qualities of Brahman which are also inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*. There is also a discussion regarding whether or not the liberated *jīva* has a body. In addition, there is a discussion about how the *jīva* obtains the seed of *bhakti* through *sādhū-saṅga* arranged by Kṛṣṇa.

Paramātmā Sandarbha – The Ontology of the Taṭastha-śakti Jīva

Jīva Gosvāmī's *Paramātmā Sandarbha* is a deep philosophical text, arguably more so than the other *Sandarbhās*. Many complex subjects are explored in great detail. Here is a summary of the essential points discussed in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*. This is quoted from the Introduction of Satyanārāyaṇa Dāsa Bābajī's translation of *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, which is the translation I used for those references in this treatise.

1. The difference between the Paramātmā and Bhagavān manifestations of *tattva*.
2. The three primary manifestations of Paramātmā and their functions.¹⁰
3. The role of the three *guṇāvatāras*, popularly known as "the Hindu Trinity," and their relative positions.
4. The difference between the terms *jīva* and *ātmā*.¹¹
5. The inherent nature of the *ātmā*.¹²
6. *Māyā* and its various functions.
7. The relationship between *māyā* and the *jīva*.
8. The mystery behind the bondage and release of the *jīva*.¹³
9. The dynamics involved in the evolution of the cosmos.
10. Examination of the nature of the world as real or unreal.
11. The intent behind the acts of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the cosmos.
12. Exploration of the question as to why God does not relieve the suffering of humanity.
13. The unbiased nature of God.

¹⁰ Karanodakasayi Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakasayi Viṣṇu are all understood to be referring to Paramātmā.

¹¹ *Ātmā* refers to the *jīva* in its pure liberated state – *svarūpa*. *Jīva* refers to the *ātmā* when it is covered by *māyā's avidyā*.

¹² This is the discussion of the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*.

¹³ This will be discussed in the section on *Mukti*.

In this section we will be focusing on item 5 – The inherent nature of the *ātmā* – the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* – which is presented in *Anucchedas*¹⁴ 19-37. Item 8 will be discussed in the section on *mukti*.

Jīva Gosvāmī's analysis is based primarily on four verses by Jāmāṭṛ Muni who paraphrased four verses from the *Padma Purāṇa*. Jāmāṭṛ Muni also included three additional attributes. There are twenty-one characteristics derived from those four verses which Jīva Gosvāmī examines one by one, covering every aspect of the *jīva's svarūpa* – its inherent nature and qualities as an eternal part of Paramātmā. Every important detail is fully delineated and nothing consequential was left out.

Following that analysis, *Anucchedas* 38-44 deal with the oneness and distinction of the *jīva* and Paramātmā (*acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*). Then, in *Anucchedas* 45-46, two verses describe ten and twelve additional characteristics of the *jīva* respectively, which are essentially the same attributes discussed initially, but offered as additional supporting confirmation from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, which Jīva Gosvāmī considers to be the highest evidence (*pramāṇa*).

Most of what Jīva Gosvāmī presents is straight forward and self evident. Some concepts are a bit complex in several *Anucchedas*, requiring a few re-reads and thoughtful deliberation. I'm going to include the key information from this group of *Anucchedas*, specifically so readers can see the level of detail, clarity, and nuances in Jīva Gosvāmī's presentation and analysis of this knowledge.

Most of the *Anucchedas* are complete, but in several longer sections, I've included only the important highlights. Even still, the level of analytical detail is staggering, intriguing, and deeply enlightening. The truth always is, especially when heard from a realized and exceptionally learned person like Śrī Jīva.

The conclusions derived from properly understanding these comprehensive details will be easily deduced with straight forward logic and reasoning, without having to resort to convoluted extrapolations and biased speculations, due to faulty understanding, and limited *adhikāra*. Thus, the many misconceptions and confusion currently proliferating among Vaiṣṇavas will be easily and irrefutably put to rest.

The analysis begins. *Anuccheda* 19 first states the verses from *Padma Purāṇa* and Jāmāṭṛ Muni to establish the basis for Śrī Jīva's forthcoming analysis. The attributes of the *jīva's svarūpa* are numbered 1-21, and the first two items are explained here as well.

¹⁴ The word *anuccheda* means a section or division. Each *anuccheda* has a verse of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as its subject.

Svarūpa-lakṣaṇa of the Jīva – Twenty-one Intrinsic Qualities

Anuccheda 19 – Introduction to Jīva-tattva

The *jīva*, or the individual self, is counted among the attendants of Paramātmā. Its extrinsic characteristic (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*) was stated earlier [in *Anuccheda* 1] in SB, 5.11.12, namely, that it is the conditional knower of the presentational field of its own body-mind complex.

The intrinsic characteristics (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) [of the *jīva*] were imparted by Śrī Jāmāṭṛ Muni, a very senior teacher of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya in the line of Śrī Rāmānujācārya, who has followed the *Padma Purāṇa*, where it is said in the course of explaining *praṇava* (*Om*):

The letter *m* [in *Om*] signifies the *jīva*, “the witness of the presentational field of the body” (*kṣetrajña*), who is always dependent upon and subservient to the Supreme Self, Paramātmā. He is [constitutionally] a servant of Bhagavān Hari only, and never of anyone else.

He is the conscious substratum, endowed with the attribute of knowledge. He is conscious and beyond matter. He is never born, undergoes no modification, is of one [unchanging] form, and situated in his own essential identity (*svarūpa*).

He is atomic [i.e., the smallest particle without any parts], eternal, pervasive of the body, and intrinsically of the nature of consciousness and bliss. He is the referent of the pronoun “I”, imperishable, the proprietor of the body, distinct from all other *jīvas*, and never ending.

The *jīva* cannot be burnt, cut, wetted, or dried, and is not subject to decay. He is endowed with these and other attributes. He is indeed the irreducible remainder [i.e., the integrated part] of the Complete Whole. (*Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa* 226.34-37)

Śrī Jāmāṭṛ Muni similarly instructs [in four verses]:

The *ātmā* is neither god, nor human, nor subhuman, nor is it an immovable being [a tree, mountain, and so on]. It is not the body, nor the senses, mind, vital force, or the intellect.

It is not inert, not mutable, nor mere consciousness. It is conscious of itself and self-luminous; it is of one form and is situated in its own essential nature.

It is conscious, pervades the body, and is intrinsically of the nature of consciousness and bliss. It is the direct referent of the pronoun “I”, is distinct [from other individual selves] in each body, atomic [i.e., the smallest particle without further parts], eternal, and unblemished.

It is intrinsically endowed with the characteristics of knower-ship [cognition], agency [will to perform action], and experiential capacity [affectivity]. Its nature by its own inner constitution is to be always the unitary, irreducible remainder [i.e., the integrated part] of the Complete Whole, Paramātmā.

This explanation [the above four verses] is given in accordance with the commentary of Śrī Rāmānuja on the *Brahma-Sūtra*. Of these characteristics, the first, that the *jīva* [i.e., the *ātmā*] is not a god, a human, or any other species of life, was implied in *Tattva Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 54) from the following verse:

Just as the vital force (*prāṇa*) remains unchanging as it accompanies the individual living being (*jīva*) in whichever different species it may appear, whether born from eggs, wombs, seeds, or perspiration, the *ātmā* is unchanging in the state of deep sleep when the senses and ego are deactivated and there is freedom from the subtle body, which is the cause of transformation.

Yet, upon awakening, the remembrance comes to us that we slept peacefully without awareness of anything [and this indicates that in deep sleep the self is present as a pure witness devoid of the content of sensual, mental, or egoic awareness]. (SB, 11.3.39)

The second characteristic, that the *jīva* is distinct from the body, the senses, and so on, is stated by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

The *ātmā*, which is the witness and self-aware, is distinct from the subtle and gross bodies, in the same way that fire, which burns and illumines, is different from the wood that is burnt. (SB, 11.10.8)

The reason the *ātmā* is distinct [from the subtle and gross bodies] is that he is their witness as well as their illuminator, but the *ātmā* itself is self-aware, meaning it is self-luminous.

The twenty-one inherent attributes of the *jīva's svarūpa* were delineated in these verses and the first two were explained in *Anuccheda* 19 above. Each of the remaining attributes will be explained one by one in the following *Anucchedas*.

***Anuccheda* 20 – The Jīva Is Not Inert.**

Rejecting that the self is essentially inert [*na jaḍaḥ*, quality 3], Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

Wakefulness, dreaming, and deep sleep are [the three] conditional states of the mental faculty, arising out of the *guṇas* of material nature. The *jīva*, however, has been ascertained to be distinct from these states, due to its being their witness. (SB, 11.13.27)

On the other hand, that the self-nature of being transcendent, called *turiyatva* [literally, “being of the fourth state,” beyond the three conditional states mentioned above], is found in Paramātmā also, is a fact that is widely acknowledged, as found in the [next

verse, where it is said,] “Therefore, becoming established in Me, ‘the fourth state,’ the *jīva* should abandon this identification [with the mental states]”. (SB, 11.13.28)

But the transcendence [*turīyatva*] found in Paramātmā is altogether of a different category from that belonging to the *jīva*.

Anuccheda 21 The Jīva Is Free of Modifications.

Denying the mutability of the *jīva* [*na vikārī*, quality 4], Śrī Dattātreya told Yadu:

The various states beginning with birth and ending with death are caused by time, whose course cannot be ascertained. They belong to the body alone and not to the *ātmā*, just as the phases of the moon [come and go without affecting the moon itself]. SB, 11.7.48

Due to its being a fluid orb, the moon does nothing more than reflect the light of the sun according to its different phases. Its [apparent] waxing and waning are those of the phases and not of the moon itself. Similarly, the different states beginning with birth and ending with death are of the body alone, brought about by the passage of time, the course of which cannot be ascertained, and do not appertain to the *ātmā*.

Anuccheda 22 – The Jīva Is Not Mere Consciousness.

It was said earlier by Jāmāṭṛ Muni, “The *ātmā* is not mere consciousness” [*jñāna-mātrātmako na ca*, quality 5]. What exactly does this mean? It means that even while being purely of the nature of consciousness, the *jīva* has the capacity to know, just as light, which is itself luminous, also has the power to illuminate [other objects]. This was demonstrated by the following verse, quoted in the *Tattva Sandarbha* (Anuccheda 53):

Because it is the witness of the variable states [childhood, youth, and so on] of the transient material body, this *ātmā* is without birth, growth, decay, or death. Although the *ātmā* is exclusively of the nature of consciousness, present everywhere, eternal, and invariable, it appears to assume various forms under the influence of sense perception and cognition, just as the vital force (*prāṇa*) within the body, although one, appears as if many in contact with the various senses. (SB, 11.3.38)

It is perfectly clear from the above that the self has such power of knowing, because the verse says that although the *ātmā* is exclusively of the nature of consciousness, it is a knower, or witness, of the variable states of the transient material body. Therefore, it was said, “[The knower of the presentational field], being pure, merely perceives [these beginningless modifications] of the impure actor”. (SB, 5.11.12)

Śrī Kapiladeva expresses this in a different way:

Upon seeing *prakṛti* create, through her *guṇas*, varieties of progeny with forms corresponding to those *guṇas*, he [the self], existing in this world, became immediately bewildered by *prakṛti*'s power to conceal consciousness. (SB, 3.26.5)

In this verse, by the words “upon seeing,” “bewildered,” and “by the power to conceal consciousness,” the self's knowing capacity (*jñāna*) is understood as interior to its being, and hence distinct from *prakṛti* and her self-generated ignorance, which [by contrast] is external to the self.

It can thus be deduced that the self's knowing capacity must be a function of its own innate power alone. In the *Gītā* also it is said, “Living beings are bewildered because their consciousness is covered by ignorance”. (BG, 5.15)

The following four *Anucchedas* discuss the *jīva*'s other inherent potencies or *śaktis* (bliss, etc.) which have been eternally (*anādi*) covered by *Māyā*'s inconceivable potency. So they have not yet manifest to exhibit their potential, which is the *jīva*'s great misfortune.

Anuccheda 23 – The Jīva Has Potencies in Addition to Jñāna

In the *Bhāgavatam*, the Śrutis speak of other potencies (*śaktis*) belonging to the *jīva*:

Yet, the *jīva*, due to the influence of *Māyā*, embraces ignorance and, delighting in her qualities, adopts a suitable form [to enjoy them]. He thereby suffers death, all his good fortune being lost. (SB, 10.87.38)

Śrīdhara Svāmī comments, “Yet, the *jīva*, because of embracing ignorance due to the influence of the unborn *Māyā*, delights in the *guṇas*, or in other words, in the body and senses [which are products of the *guṇas*], meaning that it identifies with them.

Subsequently, it adopts a suitable form, indicating that it takes on their nature and characteristics. Thus, its good fortune is lost, which means that its [intrinsic] qualities, such as bliss (*ānanda*), are obscured, and it suffers death, signifying that it is subjected to the cycle of birth and death.”

Anuccheda 24 – The Jīva's Potency Is Intrinsic – I

Furthermore, the Haryaśvas said:

What is to be gained in this world through the unmeritorious deeds of a man who is unaware that he has fallen from his glory through association with her (*Māyā*) and continuously follows her movements like the husband of an unchaste woman? (SB, 6.5.15)

Māyā is like an adulterous wife in whose association the living entity has lost its glory, namely, some portion of its capacities, such as its own innate awareness. The word *saṁsāranta* here means the one who continuously follows her movements.

This refers to the *jīva*, or in other words, the living entity in its own essential nature. So the *jīva* is the implied object of the relation expressed by the word *abudhasya* – of he who is unaware – which is found in the second part of the verse and to which the word *saṁsāranta* is syntactically connected.

Anuccheda 25 – The Jīva’s Potency Is Intrinsic – II

Furthermore, Śrī Maitreya said: Such is Bhagavān’s extrinsic potency [Māyā], which contradicts all logic, for [due to its influence] the living entity, who [by nature] is the ruler and liberated, experiences misery and bondage. (SB, 3.7.9)

Īśvarasya [literally, "of the ruler"] means “of one who is intrinsically endowed with some power,” such as the capacity to know.

In the above *Anuccheda*, the word *īśvarasya* refers to the *jīva* and not to Paramātmā.

Anuccheda 26 – The Jīva’s Potency Is Intrinsic – III

Furthermore, Śrī Nārada said to Prācinabarhi:

Thus deluded and cheated of his entire nature by the queen, the ignorant king impotently imitated his wife without wanting to, like a pet animal, (SB, 4.25.62)

Being deluded by queen Purañjanī, Purañjana was cheated, meaning that he was made to abandon, his entire [true] nature in the form of self-awareness, and so on. The phrase “without wanting to,” means that he acted according to her desires alone. The verb “imitated” means that he superimposed her phenomenal characteristics upon his own true self [becoming thus identified with her qualitative nature].

Regarding the *jīva*’s being intrinsically endowed with potency (*śakti*), the following *sūtra* should also be considered: “By the will of Bhagavān, however, [the *jīva*’s intrinsic qualities] are obscured, because from Him proceed the self’s bondage and liberation.” (BS, 3.2.5)

The next two *Anucchedas* discuss the *jīva*'s inherent self-awareness.

Anuccheda 27 – The Jīva Is Conscious of Itself

Anuccheda 27.1 – The Jīva Is Self-Aware

To clarify the above meaning [i.e., that the *ātmā* is not mere consciousness but also intrinsically endowed with cognitive awareness] Jāmātṛ Muni [*Anuccheda 19*] said, “It is conscious of itself and self-luminous” [*svasmai svayam-prakāśaḥ syāt*, qualities 6 and 7]. The self's characteristic of self-luminosity was expressed [also in *Anuccheda 19*] by the word *sva-dṛk* (“self-aware”) in *Bhāgavatam* (11.10.8) [the principal verse of that section].

Luminosity is of two kinds, based on the distinction made between luminosity as a quality and a luminous substance. The first kind of luminosity is that which makes visible the source of its own luminosity; the second kind is the specific [luminous] entity itself that is instrumental in making itself and other objects visible.

In this particular instance, since the *ātmā* is accepted as a substance, only the latter type of luminosity is applicable. For example, a lamp, in illuminating the eye, makes both itself and other objects visible of its own accord, without dependence on another light to reveal it, as would be the case for a clay pot. Therefore, the lamp is [called] self-luminous. It is not, however, self-revealing in regard to itself, and thus it is said to be inert or unconscious.

The *ātmā*, on the other hand, illuminates both itself and others, but since it is also self-revealing in regard to its own self [i.e., because it is self-aware], it was said that it is “self-illuminating of its own self” – or in other words, self-aware and self-luminous. For this reason, it is said to be inherently of the nature of consciousness.

Anuccheda 27.2 – The Jīva Is Self-Luminous

Just because the self is illuminated by Paramātmā, it should not be considered as *para-prakāśya*, or in other words, as something requiring illumination from an external source, in the manner of [an inert object] like a clay pot. This is because Paramātmā is the supreme intrinsic essence (*parama-svarūpa*) of the individual self, and so in the case of the self's illumination by Paramātmā, there is a complete absence of dependence on any external source for its illumination. This indeed is expressed by Bhagavān in two verses:

My dear Uddhava, My *māyā*, consisting of the three *guṇas*, creates by these *guṇas* varieties of difference and varieties of intellection related to difference. So, although [the psychosomatic organism] is subject to many kinds of modifications, they are broadly speaking of three categories:

One is *adhyātma* [modifications related to the psychological instruments of perception], then *adhibhūta* [those related to the physical objects perceived], and the other is *adhidaiva*

[those related to the deistic, or environmental, encoding that correlates the instrument to the object].

The faculty of sight [adhyātma], the visible forms [adhibhūta], and the individuated portion of the sun [that enters] here in the aperture of the eye [adhidaiva] actualize their respective potentials through mutual dependence and interrelation.

[On the other hand,] that which exists in the sky [i.e., the sun] realizes its potential of its own accord [meaning that it self-reveals itself without dependence on any other luminous source].

[Similarly,] the *ātmā*, because it is distinct from and prior to these [three, i.e., instrument, object, and deistic encoding], enables the actualization of the potentials of all interdependent categories through its own immediate experiential or conscious capacity. (SB, 11.22.30-31)

...On the other hand, that which exists in the sky, namely, the sun, realizes its potential independently. Even though the sun is also an object of sight, it is said to be independent, simply because of the absence of dependence on any counterpart [e.g., another sun] in the matter of [dispelling] its antithesis [darkness].

In the same way, just as the sun, the “self” of the solar system, is independently self-revealing, so too is the *ātmā*. To indicate this, [Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa] says “because,” i.e., by virtue of the above example, the *ātmā*, which is different from and prior to these, being the support and foundation of the *adhyātma*, *adhibhūta*, and *adhidaiva* correlatives, is also independently self-revealing.

The *ātmā*, however, is unique because of its conscious nature, as indicated by the words “through its own immediate experiential or conscious capacity”. And this is not all; rather, the *ātmā* is that by which the actualization of the potentials of all interdependent categories [of the psycho-somatic organism] is enabled.

In the next *Anuccheda*, quality 8, i.e., *eka-rūpa*, has been used by some inherency proponents as proof that the *jīva*'s *svarūpa* also includes its eternal *līlā* form. The details in this *Anuccheda* will show how this so-called proof is another classic example of not understanding things in the proper context, and extrapolating incorrectly due to one's mistaken bias. *Eka-rūpa* simply means the *jīva*'s form (*rūpa*) is uniform in nature, with no parts. It has nothing to do with a *līlā* form or identity.

***Anuccheda* 28 – The *Jīva* Is Uniform, Self-Situated, Conscious, Pervasive, and of the Nature of Consciousness and Bliss**

Because the *jīva* illumines precisely in this manner, by the potency arising from its own essential nature, its attributes of being uniform [*eka-rūpa*, quality 8], and of being situated in its own essential nature [*svarūpa-bhāk*, quality 9], are consequently also exactly like a lamp. The word *mātra* (exclusively) in *upalabdhi-mātram* [the self is exclusively of the

nature of consciousness] in SB, 11.3.38 [cited in *Anuccheda* 22] implies that these inherent qualities are also not separate from the *jīva*'s own essential identity (*svarūpa*).

Next to be considered is the self's characteristic of being conscious [*cetana*, quality 10]. This signifies that although the self is by its very own constitution exclusively of the nature of consciousness, it also renders conscious other objects, such as the body, just as a lamp [which is of the nature of light] illuminates other objects [as well as itself].

This idea was expressed by means of the example in SB, 11.10.8 [also in *Anuccheda* 19], where the word "illuminator," *prakāśaka*, is found, which can be taken to mean "that which is the cause of making an object conscious [just as fire makes an iron rod fiery hot]."

The *jīva*'s characteristic of pervasiveness [*vyāpti-śīlatva*, quality 11] will be demonstrated in the statements of Prahlaḍa [SB, 7.7.19, quoted in *Anuccheda* 46 below] where the word *vyāpaka* is used. The term *vyāpti-śīlatva* means that the self's nature is to pervade the interior of all unconscious phenomena in a highly subtle manner.

Another reason why the self is "not merely of the nature of consciousness" is that it is "intrinsically of the nature of consciousness and bliss" [*cid-ānandātmaka*, quality 12]. Because the self is not inert [literally, because of its being the counter-positive of inertness], it is of the nature of consciousness, and because of its being the counter-positive of misery, it is of the nature of consciousness and bliss.

That the self is of the nature of consciousness has already been illustrated [in *Anuccheda* 27]. That the self is also of the nature of bliss, *ānandatva*, is established by Śrī Śuka by pointing out that it is the object of unadulterated love:

Therefore, all embodied beings consider their own self to be supremely dear. The whole of this creation, moving and stationary, is loved for the sake of the self alone. (SB, 10.14.54)

The meaning here is self-evident.

The next three *Anucchedas* establish that the sense of having a unique individual identity is an inherent aspect of the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*. That is different from the false ego's (*ahankāra*) identification with the subtle and gross material bodies, and one's temporary identity therein. This is another fascinating examination of philosophical esoterica by Jīva Gosvāmī.

***Anuccheda* 29 – The Jīva Is the Referent of "I" – I**

The individual *jīva*, who is conscious and of the nature of bliss, is not the referent of the pronoun "you," which is but a reflection [of the prototype of the self as "I"]. Rather, it is indeed the referent of the pronoun "I" [quality 13], since it is intrinsically of the nature of the self. The [*jīva*'s] state of being, that existent to which the pronoun "I" refers, is indeed the experiential condition of being "I" (*aham-bhāva eva*).

Thus, consciousness, which alone is the primary meaning of the pronoun “I,” is the pure *ātmā*; otherwise, absorption in matter would not be possible. Because of this absorption, the *jīva* acquires an alternative sense of “I,” identified with the aggregate of the material elements [i.e., the body]. It is with this intention that Śrī Kapiladeva speaks about the self’s being the referent of “I”:

By thus identifying with that which is other than itself [namely, the body-mind complex], the self attributes to itself the doership of actions that are in fact carried out by the *guṇas* of primordial nature. (SB, 3.26.6)

Parābhidhyānena means “by identifying with material nature,” i.e., by believing “I am nothing other than *prakṛti*.” By so doing, one considers oneself to be the agent of actions conducted by the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*.

In this regard, because it would be impossible for an entity utterly devoid of the sense of “I” to become identified with another, and because the *ahaṅkāra*, or empirical ego, born of identification with the other [*prakṛti*] is a covering [of the primordial sense of self], there is certainly another distinct sense of “I” inherent within the self.

Moreover, because that sense of “I” is grounded exclusively in the *jīva*’s pure identity, it is clearly not the cause of its material bondage. It is precisely these two kinds of *ahaṅkāra* that are indicated in the following verse [from the Eleventh Canto]:

“The *ātmā* is unchanging in the state of deep sleep when the senses and ego are deactivated and there is freedom from the subtle body, which is the cause of transformation. Yet, upon awakening, the remembrance comes to us that we slept peacefully without awareness of anything [and this indicates that in deep sleep, the self is present as pure witness devoid of the content of sensual, mental, or egoic awareness].” (SB, 11.3.39)

Firstly, the artificial sense of “I” related to the body is inactive in deep sleep, and secondly, on awakening, one deliberates on the basis of the [true] sense of “I” that “I slept happily”, because “such remembrance comes to us”.

For these reasons, in the notion [conveyed by the statement] “I did not know myself,” what is being indicated is the absence of awareness of the phenomenal “I” related to the body. This further implies awareness of the other [true] “I” [in relation to the *ātmā*], because the latter is by contrast the witness of the non-awareness [of the phenomenal “I”].

To summarize and clarify the above analysis, when the *jīva* is in the waking or dreaming states, the false ego “I” (*ahaṅkāra*) predominates. However, when the *jīva* is in the state of deep sleep, it is not connected to the gross or subtle bodies, being merged temporarily within *Paramātmā*, with no sensory awareness. In that deep sleep state the *jīva*’s sense of “I” is its inherent true “I”-ness, and it remains active and aware in deep sleep, even though there is no

possibility of sense perception. Thus, the true “I” is the one who remembers “sleeping peacefully”.

***Anuccheda* 30 – The Jīva Is the Referent of “I” – II**

Just as a man who sees others dancing and singing imitates them, so the self, although action-less, upon witnessing the states of the intellect is impelled to follow them. (SB, 11.22.52)

The explanation of this verse is as in the previous *Anuccheda* [i.e., the real “I” is herein distinguished from the phenomenal “I”].

***Anuccheda* 31 – The jīva Is the Referent of “I” – III**

Similarly, while also applying the example of dreams, Śrī Maitreya said:

[It is because of this *māyā*] that the self assumes a position that is contrary to its inherent nature, just as it appears to the witness of the dream state that he has been beheaded and other similar contradictions, even though such dream cognitions are without reality. (SB, 3.7.10)

The word *upadraṣṭuḥ* (“to the witness”) and the demonstrative pronoun *amuṣya* (“to that”) refer to the observer of the dream, by which is meant the *jīva*.

Jīva Gosvāmī has herein discussed these various aspects related to the *jīva*’s sense of being a unique individual person, and yet there was no indication that the *jīva*’s sense of individual identity is directly associated with a particular relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās*, i.e., “I am a *gopī*, or *gopa*, or servant in a Vaikuṇṭha realm”.

If that was an inherent aspect of the *jīva*’s *svarūpa*, then the true sense of “I” would be associated with a particular *rasa* with Kṛṣṇa. These *Anucchedas* would thus certainly be where such discussions would be presented, but they are conspicuous by their absence, indicating clearly that the *jīva*’s unique sense of “I” has nothing to do with *jīva*’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās*.

***Anuccheda* 32 – A Distinct Jīva in Each Body**

By establishing that “I”-consciousness is intrinsic to the self’s inherent identity, it is automatically established that the self is also distinct in each body [prati-kṣetram bhinnah, quality 14]. Yet, the following reference [seems to support the oneness of the jīvas, which is contrary to the above conclusion. To the necessarily dualistic question of the jñānī Kumāras, “Who are you?” Bhagavān Hamsadeva replied]:

If the substantive called the Self is utterly devoid of multiplicity, then how could a question such as this even arise to you, O *vipras*? Furthermore, what particularities [such

as race, qualities, and so on] could possibly form the basis of My reply [when the one Self is devoid of all such differentiation]? (SB, 11.13.22)

In this regard, the oneness of the *jīvātmās* indicated in the words of Śrī Hamsadeva, who assumes the perspective of an ordinary *jīva*, is posited in accordance with the common fashion of a teacher of the *jñāna-mārga*, or as a consequence of the material vision of the Kumāras [implied by their dualistic question].

So, although there is a difference among parts, or between the whole and its parts, this statement of the oneness of the *jīvas* is indeed spoken as a means to *jñāna* for those desiring *jñāna*, and is submitted with reference to the *jīvas*' common identity [of consciousness], without distinguishing their individuality. This type of indiscriminated reference to a single common attribute is expressed again in the very next verse:

Your question, “Who are you?” [if it relates to the physical body], is indeed just a meaningless sequence of words, since the bodies of the living beings are identical, constituted in reality of the five elements. (SB, 11.13.23)

Even in this regard, a difference exists among individuated parts. Therefore, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa Himself says: “The wise see with equal vision a *brāhmaṇa* endowed with education and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater”. (BG, 5.18) And, “Brahman is equipoised and faultless”. (BG, 5.19)

Here the word *brahman* refers to the *jīva*. As Śrī Nārada said: “By the influence of enlightened intuition, I could perceive that this cause-effect aggregate [in the form of my body or the universe] is merely assumed out of self-ignorance as existing in me, [which is to say] in Parabrahman.” (SB, 1.5.27)

The meaning of this statement is as follows: This cause-effect aggregate in the form of my body is merely assumed out of self-ignorance as existing in me, the [individuated] Brahman. Additionally, in the form of the universe, it is assumed as existing in the Supreme Brahman.

Because of the ignorance related to the self, called *jīva-māyā*, I conceived that “I am the body alone,” and that “the universe alone, consisting of gods, such as Indra and Candra, is the supreme regulating agency.” By the influence of enlightened intuition, I realized that all this was merely conceptually constructed.

It is only because of the *jīvas*' common identity [of consciousness], indicated above as well as elsewhere, that we find identity statements, such as, “I am That” and “You are That.”

...Intending all this, the Śrutis submit their own view that there is a different *jīva* in each body: “If the embodied beings [*jīvas*], who are innumerable and eternal, were to be admitted as all-pervading...” (SB, 10.87.30).

Here, because innumerability and eternality are read as prior to the hypothetical conjunction *yadi* (if), there is no doubt about their [being attributes of the *jīva*]. This is the view of the Śrutis. But all-pervasiveness is read after *yadi* [in the verse], indicating that there is doubt in this regard. This clearly shows that the latter supposition is the view of others [and not that of the Śrutis]. For this reason, the statement describing Paramātmā, “One Divinity remains hidden in all beings,” informs us of the plurality of the *jīvas*.

The above analysis proves from various angles of understanding that there is a distinct individual *jīva* in each material body. It also shows the level of detail Śrī Jīva felt was necessary to understand this point correctly, contrary to the various impersonalist views. In other words, as discussed in the *Brahma-sūtras*, the *jīvas* are not all one, nor are they all-pervading.

The next two *Anucchedas* examine the size of the *jīva*, which also ties into the understanding that there is a unique *jīva* in each body.

***Anuccheda* 33 – The *Jīva* Is Atomic in Size**

Jāmātṛ Muni offers another reason why there is a different *jīva* in each body – namely, because it is *a aṇu* [quality 15]. The word *aṇu* here means atomic (*paramāṇu*)¹⁵, which means that it cannot be further subdivided even with respect to spatial dimensions [like a point].

This indeed is the irreducible limit of a particle according to authorities in this particular field [i.e., the Vaiśeṣika philosophers]. Although atomic, it infuses consciousness into the whole body because this is its innate quality manifesting as a unique potency. This potency is like that of a dose of *mahaṣadhi* (a type of medicinal herb), which nourishes the entire body even if it is embedded in lac and kept on a single part of the body, such as the head. Or it is like that of a magnet, which induces a piece of iron to move.

Its atomicity is spoken of by Śrī Kṛṣṇa: “Among immense objects I am the *mahat-tattva*, and of subtle [i.e., infinitesimal] things I am the *jīva*”. (SB, 11.16.11)

Therefore, the *jīva* is the irreducible limit of infinitesimality. Here the word *sūkṣmatva* is meant not in the sense of subtleness due to incomprehensibility [but rather, in the sense of infinitesimality or minuteness]. Otherwise, the natural flow of these two statements, “Among immense objects I am the *mahat-tattva*, and of subtle [i.e., infinitesimal] things I am the *jīva*,” spoken of consecutively in mutual contrast, would be lost.

In regard to the manifested cosmos, the *mahat-tattva*'s quality of immensity actually refers to its pervasiveness because it is the cause of all subsequent phenomenal appearances. [So just as the *sūkṣmatva* of the *jīva* here does not refer to subtleness due to incomprehensibility] the *mahattva* of the *mahat-tattva* does not imply that it is easily

15 The word “atom” here is used to signify an entity that is limited, without parts, and hence indivisible.

comprehensible in comparison to other elements, such as Earth. Similarly, the subtleness of the jīvas in the world refers specifically to their atomicity. This is the natural meaning.

The following Śruti statements also support this: “This atomic self is to be realized through pure intelligence into which the vital force (*prāṇa*) has entered in five forms [implying that the vital force is supported by the *ātmā*]” (MUU, 3.1.9); “The size of the *jīva* should be known as one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair” (SU, 5.9); and “The *jīva* is perceived as of the size of the tip of an awl [or knife]”. (SU, 5.8)

Anuccheda 34 – The Śrutis Argue For the Atomicity of the Jīva

So the Śrutis said:

O eternal one [Bhagavān], if the embodied beings [*jīvas*], who are innumerable and eternal, were to be admitted as all-pervading, then their subordination to another could not be maintained, [for that] is possible only in the opposite case [of their being atomic in size and not all-pervading]. You, from whom all these *jīvas* have come, being their cause, pervade them unrestrictedly [i.e., completely]; thus You are their regulator. Those who consider You as equal to others have not understood You due to adopting a faulty view. (SB, 10.87.30)

This verse is to be understood as follows: It is described [in the Śrutis] that the *jīva* is an integrated part of Paramātmā and is thus an emanation from Him. Since texts like *Gītā* 15.7 (*mamāi-vāṁśo jīva-loke*) establish the *jīva* as a part [of Paramātmā], it is improper to consider it as all-pervading.

To correct this misconception, the Śrutis speak this verse. In reality, the *jīvas* (*tanu-bhṛta*, literally, “embodied beings”) are countless in number and eternal. If they were all-pervading, then they would not be subject to anyone else’s control, because in that case, they would all be equal, not being pervaded by anyone. In other words, the Vedic principle that Īśvara is the regulator and the *jīva* the regulated would not apply.

...Therefore, only Paramātmā is all-pervading, as is said: “One Divinity remains hidden in all beings. He is all-pervading and the indwelling Self of all beings” (SU, 6.11). Therefore, the *jīva* is certainly atomic.

But what, then, is intended by the description of the *jīva* in *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā*, wherein it is said, “It is eternal, all-pervading, and stable” (BG, 2.24)? Here “all-pervading” indeed refers to Śrī Bhagavān. Situated in Him and being under His shelter, the atomic *jīva* is [also] referred to as all-pervading and stable.

Anuccheda 35 explains that the quality of agency (the will to act) is inherent in the *jīva* even though it appears that external elements (*prakṛti*) are the agents of action.

Anuccheda 35 – The Jīva Is Eternal, Unblemished, and Endowed With Knowership and Agency

The *jīva* is eternal [*nitya*, quality 16] and unblemished [*nirmala*, quality 17] because it is intrinsically pure by nature, as demonstrated already in SB, 5.11.12 (*Anuccheda* 2): “The pure knower of the presentational field merely witnesses these beginningless modifications of the impure actor, the mind.”

Moreover, by the very same statement it is further shown that the capacity to know [*jñāṭṛtva*, quality 18] also belongs even to the pure *ātmā* [by virtue of its being a knower of the presentational field]. And this cognitive capacity, being a natural attribute of the eternal self, is also eternal and thus does not undergo modifications.

Because the body is seen to have agency [*kartṛtva*, quality 19] as a result of its relation to the [individual] conscious being, and because inert objects are also acknowledged as sometimes exhibiting agency due to the presence of the indwelling [Supreme] consciousness, in accordance with the statement, “without whom nothing is accomplished,” [it is concluded that] agency ensues only from the pure [i.e., only from the individual or from the Supreme Consciousness]. Thus, it is said: “Being infused with whose [conscious] portion, the body, senses, vital force, mind, and intellect perform their respective functions” (SB, 6.16.24).

When this agency comes about primarily due to the adjuncts¹⁶ (*upādhis*), it is said to be an attribute of the adjuncts, as is stated, “The cause of agency in the body and senses is known to be *prakṛti*” (SB, 3.26.8). When, however, agency comes about predominantly due to Paramātmā, it is free from those adjuncts (*nirupādhi*) [meaning that it is transcendental]. As Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa said:

An unattached agent is *sāttvika*, one blinded by attachment is *rājasika*, and one whose discrimination has been altogether lost is *tāmasika*; but the agent who works under My shelter is free from the material *guṇas*. (SB, 11.25.26)

The meaning is clear.

Anuccheda 36 – Experiential Capacity is Rooted in the Jīva

Next to be considered is experiential capacity [*bhokṛtṛtva*, quality 20], which is in the form of feeling, or affect, and which culminates in the *jīva* alone, who is conscious by nature. As Bhagavān Kapila says in the same section of the Third Canto [referred to above]: “[Know] the *puruṣa*, who is transcendental to *prakṛti* [to be the cause] in experiencing happiness and misery”. (SB, 3.26.8)

¹⁶ *Upādhis* has been translated as ‘adjuncts’, i.e., a thing added to something else as supplementary, e.g., the gross and subtle bodies of the *jīva*.

These two lines are to be syntactically connected with the words “know to be the cause” found in the previous line of the verse.

The next *Anuccheda* is the last one describing the twenty-one qualities of the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*. We’ve all heard numerous times that we are “part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa”. Now, to put a finer point on that understanding, Śrī Jīva explains that the *tatastha-śakti jīvas* in the material worlds are eternally a part of Paramātmā. Keep in mind that there are unlimited material universes, and thus, unlimited manifestations of Paramātmā, all of whom are direct expansions of Mahā Viṣṇu.

I’ve distilled the essence of this *Anuccheda* because it is quite lengthy but an important aspect of related knowledge to assimilate for a complete understanding of this topic. Always remember that these writings are the realizations of Jīva Gosvāmī and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī – their *vani*.

Anuccheda 37 – The Jīva Is an Integrated Part of Paramātmā

Next to be explained is the meaning of *paramātmaika-śeṣatva-svabhāva*, i.e., “the jīva is by nature the unitary, irreducible remainder of Paramātmā” [quality 21]. In the compound *paramātmaika-śeṣatva-svabhāva*, the word *eka* (“a unit”) refers to an entity who is other than, or distinct from, Paramātmā, and the word *śeṣa* (“remainder,” “residue”) means “a part.” That entity who is both a distinct unit (*eka*), and an irreducible part (*śeṣa*), is *eka-śeṣa*, a part of Paramātmā that is yet different from Him.

A unitary, or integrated, part of Paramātmā is known as *paramātmaika-śeṣa*, and its existential condition (*bhāva*) is called *paramātmaika-śeṣatva*. So, that which has this condition as its intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) is called *paramātmaika-śeṣatva-svabhāva* [referring to the *jīva*].

Moreover, this is its permanent state of being, implying that such is the case even in the liberated state. The *jīva* has this intrinsic nature by its very own inner constitution (*svarūpata eva*), meaning that it is not the outcome of some covering or limitation [on Brahman by *māyā*].

By virtue of Paramātmā’s natural inconceivable potency, the *jīva* is by nature like a particle of His rays, but in its conditioned state, it becomes to a certain degree a part even of the material energy, *prakṛti*. This is the [double] sense of the word *svataḥ*, “by its own inner constitution” [in the verses of Jāmāṭṛ Muni in *Anuccheda 19*].

The *jīva* is understood to be of the nature of energy, because (1) it is the intermediary potency (*tatastha-śakti*) [of Paramātmā]; (2) though it is like a ray of Paramātmā, it is still ever under His shelter, meaning that it cannot exist without Him; (3) it is the means by which the universal creation takes place, as is said: “The *jīva* is the cause of this creation” (SB, 12.7.18); and (4) although it is a substance [*dravya*, signifying that it is the inherent cause of effects, or the substratum of qualities], it is similar to *pradhāna* [which is energy].

...Similarly, [it is said] in the *Gītā*, “The living being (*jīva*) in this conditioned world is an eternal integrated part of Me alone.” Therefore, it was said: “Other than this [eightfold material] nature, I have a superior nature in the form of the *jīva*...”. (BG, 7.5).

...In this way, although the *jīva* is an energy, it is distinct from the other two [intrinsic and extrinsic] due to being intermediately situated (*taṭastha*). It is intermediate because it cannot be subsumed under either of the other two categories. The reason for this is that it is superior to the *māyā* energy; [but at the same time,] it is subject to the defect of being overpowered by ignorance, which does not influence Paramātmā.

...Thus, because the *jīva* is the inherent (*svabhāvika*) energy of Paramātmā, it is never divorced from its constitutional nature of being an integrated part of Him, even in the liberated state.

Therefore, in final liberation, which is characterized by establishment in the self's intrinsic identity (*svarūpa*) after being freed from ignorance, the merging of the self in the Absolute actually refers to entrance into the state of identity with the nature and qualities of Bhagavān, as is seen from the Śruti statements such as, “The illuminated seer, free from the conditioned state, attains the supreme sameness” (MUU, 3.1.3), and from the words of the *Gītā*:

Those who, by resorting to this knowledge, have attained sameness with My nature and qualities are not born again at the time of creation nor are they distressed at the time of dissolution. (BG, 14.2)

...So, attainment of the inherent nature of the Supreme is in accordance with the principle outlined in *Brahma-Sūtra*: “The aspired-for result of a person's contemplation manifests in exact accordance with his or her conviction because such a position is logically justifiable” (BS, 3.1.23)

It has, therefore, been established that the *jīva* is the potency of Paramātmā. Sometimes the two are described as being without distinction, because (1) there is mutual interpenetration of energy and energetic; (2) energy cannot exist without its energetic source; and (3) energy and energetic are non-distinct from the point of view that both are of the nature of consciousness. [Nevertheless,] it is also not improper to describe them as different, because varieties of energy can be seen even in a single object.

...It is also said in the *Gita*, “You pervade everything, and so You are everything” (*Gita* 11.40). The scriptures instruct non-difference to those who desire *jñāna*, but to those who desire *bhakti*, they exclusively instruct difference.

...Therefore, *Bhagavad-gītā* also affirms the eternality of the *jīva*'s identity as an integrated part of Paramātmā: “The living being (*jīva*) in this conditioned world is an eternal integrated part of Me alone” (BG, 15.7).

And so, the *jīva* is described as being a part [both collectively as well as individually]. Śrī Śuka speaks of the collective, or aggregate, *jīva* (*samaṣṭi-jīva*) as follows:

This [Hiraṇyagarbha] is the Self of all beings; He is a portion of Paramātmā and the original *avatāra* in whom all creatures are made to appear. (SB, 3.6.8)

Śrīdhara Svāmī comments: “The word *sattva* here refers to the living beings [and not all existing things]. This [Hiraṇyagarbha] is the Self of all living beings because the individual beings are His parts. The word *aṁśa* (“a part”) means the *jīva*. The word *avatāra* is used with the intent of saying that Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa manifests in the [*samaṣṭi-jīva*].”

In this last *Anuccheda* Jīva Gosvāmī has established conclusively that the *jīva* is eternally an *aṁśa* of Paramātmā, which means the *jīva* has never been in the spiritual world, and thus, has never had a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in any of His *līlās* in the spiritual world. The *tatastha-śakti jīvas* in the material worlds have been conditioned eternally – *anādi nitya-baddhas*. And they exist specifically to facilitate the eternal cyclic manifestation of the unlimited material universes – *śṛṣṭi-līlā*. This conclusion is irrefutable.

This is the end of Jīva Gosvāmī's thorough analysis of the twenty-one characteristics of the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*, as delineated in the four verses from Jāmāṭṛ Muni. Based on the level of detail provided by Jīva Gosvāmī, if there were any additional important aspects regarding the *jīva's svarūpa*, it should be more than obvious that Śrī Jīva would have included them here.

He certainly made no mention whatsoever that the *jīva's* eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās* is an inherent aspect of the *jīva's svarūpa*, what to speak of any inherent details related to that relationship. Jīva Gosvāmī would never have neglected to discuss such details.

Moving on, in *Anucchedas* 38-44, Jīva Gosvāmī discusses the oneness and distinction of the *jīva* and Paramātmā. This is an important aspect of the *jīva's svarūpa* but more in relation to the *jīva's* connection to Paramātmā, which was elaborated in *Anuccheda* 37. I will summarize this section with just the highlights as they relate to the purposes of this treatise.

Anuccheda 38 gives further confirmation of what was stated in *Anuccheda* 37.

As to the individual self [being a part of Paramātmā], Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa says:

O highly intelligent [Uddhava], bondage through beginningless ignorance and its alternative through knowledge exist only for this *jīva*, who is indeed a unitary [integrated] part of Me. (SB, 11.11.4)

The “alternative” [to bondage] means liberation. On the one hand, there is the individuated self, who is like an atomic ray of light, implying that on the other hand, there [must be] a collective or cosmic being, who is identified with all individuals.

Anuccheda 39 explains that the *jīva* is directly a part of Paramātmā and not Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is an important distinction to understand. Here is an excerpt.

...By making it clear that the *jīva* is a part only of that [form of God] which is qualified by the *jīva* potency [i.e., Paramātmā], and not of the pure, or Absolute, [i.e., not of Bhagavān directly, who is without the attribute of the *jīva* potency], the Śrutis are here explaining that the *jīva* is an integrated part of Paramātmā specifically by virtue of being His energy.

In *Anuccheda* 40 the oneness of the *jīva* and Paramātmā is explained for those who are on the path of *jñāna-mārga*, but it is obviously not a complete oneness.

Now the non-difference of the *jīva* and Paramātmā is shown for those who desire *jñāna*, as Paramātmā told King Purañjana:

I am you and you are no other than Me. Know decisively that you are the same as I. The wise see not the least difference between us. (SB, 4.28.62)

Anuccheda 41 briefly discusses the interpenetration of cause (Paramātmā) and effect (*jīva*) as an aspect of their non-difference. In *Anuccheda* 42 the inseparability and non-distinction of the *jīva* and Paramātmā is established as *śakti* and *śaktimān*.

Then, in *Anuccheda* 43, it is shown that the *jīva* is distinct from Paramātmā, which serves those on the *bhakti-mārga*.

Now, for those desiring *bhakti*, Bhagavān Garbhodakaśāyī instructs Brahmā in the distinction between the *jīva* and Paramātmā:

On recognizing the self to be devoid of the five gross elements, the senses, the *guṇas*, and the inner receptacle of thoughts and feelings; and, simultaneously, as accompanying Me in its own true self-identity, one attains to sovereignty. (SB, 3.9.33)

The self devoid of the material elements and so on is a reference to the pure *jīva*. “Accompanying Me” means united, in its own true self-identity (*svarūpena*), with Me, the potent source (*śakti-man*) of the *jīva-śakti*. Sovereignty means [the four kinds of devotional] liberation, such as *sārṣṭī*, or the liberated state of participation in opulence similar to that of Bhagavān.

Anuccheda 44 presents the logic of the distinction between the *jīva* and Paramātmā.

Now Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa states the reason for describing the distinction between the *jīva* and Paramātmā:

Self-realization for the *jīva*, who is saddled with beginningless ignorance, is not possible by his own efforts. It is possible only if knowledge is imparted to him by another who knows the reality. (SB, 11.22.10)

Śrīdhara Svāmī also comments: “[Knowledge of the self] is not possible by one’s own endeavor, but is possible to be received from another. Therefore, the omniscient Parameśvara is distinct from one’s own self, i.e., the *jīva*. This is the intention of those philosophers who accept 26 elements.”

Īśvara’s status of being “the bestower of knowledge” here informs us that He is distinct both from such knowledge and its knower. In a similar vein, Uddhava says further on [in this chapter of the *Bhāgavatam*]: “The *jīva*’s knowledge verily comes from You, and it is stolen away by Your potency [of *māyā*]” (SB, 11.22.28).

If Īśvara’s supremacy is considered to be nothing more than an imaginary product of the *jīva*’s ignorance, then His imparting of knowledge would also not be feasible any more than the “humanness” of a tree stump mistaken for a man. Consequently, the distinction between the *jīva* and Īśvara is real. In this way, it is self-evident that it can be only Śrīmad Īśvara himself, endowed with the transcendental self-identity of being the Supreme Regulator, who thus informs the unenlightened of His existence.

In *Anuccheda* 45 Śrī Jīva quotes three verses from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 3.25.16-18, spoken by Bhagavān Kapiladeva to his mother, Devahuti, which confirm ten of the attributes given by Jāmāṭṛ Muni in the previous *Anucchedas*. There is no need to repeat them again.

However, there is a phrase used in one of these three verses, i.e., *bhakti-yuktena*, which means “endowed with devotion”. No doubt inherency proponents will assert that this indicates *bhakti* is an intrinsic aspect of the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*. But that is not how Jīva Gosvāmī explains it.

...The compound *bhakti-yuktena*, “endowed with devotion,” implies that because the self’s manifestation [*prakāśa*, i.e., its existence] is dependent upon the grace of Paramātmā, and because of the eternality of such existence, indicated by the word *nirantara*, the *jīva* is to be understood as an integrated part of Paramātmā (*paramātmaika-śeṣatva*, *Anuccheda* 37).

As further confirmation of the individual attributes presented by Jāmāṭṛ Muni, in *Anuccheda* 46 Jīva Gosvāmī cites two more verses from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 7.7.19-20, spoken by Prahāda Mahārāja to his *asura* classmates. After discussing those verses, Śrī Jīva cites the *Skanda Purāṇa*. Take note that it states the *jīva* is “eligible for the limitlessness of liberation”, the key word being, *eligible*, indicating *potential* and not *inherency*.

Similarly, in the description of the *jīva* found in the *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* of *Skanda Purāṇa*, it is said:

The color, form, or size of the *jīva* can never be seen. No one can describe it either, because it is subtle [immaterial] and assumes unlimited forms. The *jīva* is finer in dimension than one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair, and yet it is eligible for the limitlessness [of liberation]. The *yogīs*, endowed with the eye of wisdom, see it as having a

subtle radiance the color of the sun, like a drop of water on a lotus flower, or like a star shining in the sky. (Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa)

Finally, *Anuccheda* 47 concludes the entire section dealing specifically with the *svārūpa* of the *taṭastha-śakti jīvas*, the next section being the Ontology of *Māyā – Bahiraṅgā-śakti*. This is another long *Anuccheda* so I've abridged it, focusing on the relevant key points.

This *Anuccheda* defines the two types of *jīvas* – *nitya-baddhas* and *nitya-siddhas*. Many key truths are established conclusively in this discussion.

Anuccheda* 47 – Two Types of *Jīvas

In this way, there are verily unlimited intermediary potencies (*taṭastha-śaktis*), called *jīvas*. They form two groups. One consists of those whose consciousness is turned toward Bhagavān (*bhagavad-unmukha*) without beginning; the other consists of those whose consciousness is turned away from Bhagavān (*bhagavat-parāṇ-mukha*) with no beginning. This division is according to whether or not they are intrinsically endowed with experiential awareness, or direct knowing, of Bhagavān.

Jīvas of the first group are favored by the blessings of Bhagavān's intrinsic potency and are His eternal associates, such as Garuḍa, as stated in the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of *Padma Purāṇa*, previously also cited in *Bhāgavata Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 78.1):

“There are unlimited worlds and beings in the *tripād-vibhūti*, or the transcendental abode characterized by threefold dimensionality of being [i.e., immortality, fearlessness, and all-auspicious worship of the Absolute]. All inhabitants of this realm are of the nature of unalloyed being (*suddha-sattva*) and are known as *brahmānanda-sukha*, the joy and bliss of Brahman.

They are all eternal, immutable, and devoid of the lower *guṇas*; they are golden, pure, and brilliant as a million suns. They are all full of Vedic knowledge, divine, and free from the attributes of lust and greed.

They relish only the nectar of unalloyed devotional service to Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa's lotus feet. They are always filled with the bliss of the sweet chanting of the *Sāma Veda* and are effulgent with the Vedic knowledge. They are the personifications of the fivefold worship of Bhagavān” (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa* 228.1-4).

The *jīvas* of the first category [those eternally devoted to Bhagavān] are also classified as part of the intermediary potency (*taṭastha*), because the widely acknowledged condition that “*jīva-hood*” (*jīvatva*) entails, necessarily excludes them from being included in the same category as Īśvara Himself.

Let's pause and review what Jīva Gosvāmī has written above in the first part of this *Anuccheda*. Based on these statements it is irrefutably established that *nitya-siddha jīvas* never

misuse their free will or become *averse* to Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, and as a consequence, fall into the bondage of material existence. It has never happened, nor will it ever happen.

These same truths are also given in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 2.9.10, and confirmed in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport, which I have included in the *Appendix*.

In that personal abode of the Lord, the material modes of ignorance and passion do not prevail, nor is there any of their influence in goodness. There is no predominance of the influence of time, so what to speak of the illusory, external energy; it cannot enter that region. Without discrimination, both the demigods and the demons worship the Lord as devotees. SB, 2.9.10

Thus, the long held and mistaken idea of becoming averse to Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world is obviously not true, given this clear unambiguous evidence from *śāstra* and Jīva Gosvāmī. As such, it must be understood that when Śrīla Prabhupāda made statements about misusing our free will and turning away from Kṛṣṇa, and implying that we did so in the spiritual world, he was speaking *theoretically* and not *literally*, because Jīva Gosvami has established that the *nitya-baddha jīvas* have been averse to Kṛṣṇa eternally, i.e., it didn't happen at some point in time in the past, nor did it happen in the spiritual world.

However, because of many such statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda, most devotees misconstrued them to mean that all the *jīvas* in the material worlds fell from the spiritual world due to misuse of their free will there. Those mistaken interpretations of his statements in that regard are wholly incorrect.

Therefore, it is unacceptable to use those theoretical or seemingly ambiguous statements of Śrīla Prabhupāda as valid evidence to prove that unlimited *jīvas* fell from the spiritual world due to bad behavior, because they are incongruous with *śāstra* and Jīva Gosvāmī, something Śrīla Prabhupāda said he would never do. Jīva Gosvāmī has the final word on this matter.

The paramparā system does not allow one to deviate from the commentaries of the previous ācāryas. By depending upon the previous ācāryas, one can write beautiful commentaries. However, one cannot defy the previous ācāryas. CC, 3.7.134, Purport

It is also very important to understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda was not wrong when making those theoretical or equivocal statements – he was *misunderstood* – by devotees who lacked the *adhikāra* and knowledge to grasp what he actually meant. And these misinterpretations persist largely due to a lack of study of the books of the previous ācāryas. By such study we can see how easily and conclusively these misunderstandings can be rectified, as well as reconciling Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements properly.

One more important point. Jīva Gosvāmī makes it clear that *nitya-siddhas* are eternally situated in that status – without beginning. In other words, they did not manifest from Mahā Viṣṇu and then make an initial choice to go to the spiritual world versus the material worlds. That was Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's explanation in *Jaiva-dharma*, but since it is not confirmed

by Jīva Gosvāmī we can thus understand that his explanation was also a time and circumstance adjustment for his presentation to his contemporaries, i.e., preaching.

Continuing with *Anuccheda* 47, Śrī Jīva now discusses the status of *nitya-baddhas*.

By contrast, the *jīvas* of the second category are those bound to empirical existence, being overpowered by *māyā*, which takes advantage of their flaw of indifference to Bhagavān. This condition is depicted in the *Haṁsa-guhya-stava*: “The *jīva* knows all these [the body, the vital force, and so on] as well as the *guṇas*, but though it is the knower of all these, it does not know the omniscient, unlimited [Bhagavān], whom I worship”. (SB, 6.4.25)

And also in the Eleventh Canto: “A living being who is set apart from Bhagavān becomes absorbed in separateness. As a consequence, he is overpowered by fear, his conception of being is reversed, and he becomes forgetful of his constitutional position. All this takes place by Bhagavān’s extrinsic potency. Therefore, one who is actually wise worships Him by the process of unalloyed devotion, considering his spiritual teacher as an embodiment of the Divine and as his very self”. (SB, 11.2.37)

...Although the *jīvas* whose attention is directed away from Parameśvara are pure [in their inherent nature], they are subjected to taking birth along with their *upādhis* [i.e., the body-mind complex] from Parameśvara [i.e., Paramātmā] who is intrinsically endowed with the *jīva* potency. And that birth is verily the attainment of the state of empirical selfhood [in relation to the body], caused by the phenomenal identification that mistakes the birth of one’s limiting conditions (*upādhis*) for the birth of the self.

...[During the period of dissolution,] the energies (śakti) called the jīvas, who are merged in Paramātmā, are said to be pure because their dispositions are then dormant due to the dissolution of the modifications of prakṛti. At the time of creation, however, they are conjoined to prakṛti, which is undergoing modifications. Their dispositions being revived, they relapse into the conditioned state and spread forth [i.e., manifest in the world].

...Thereafter, at the time of dissolution, all these *jīvas* along with their limiting adjuncts [again merge into You], who are the original conscious source comparable to the sun orb, and who are intrinsically self-endowed with the potency known as the pure *jīva*, characterized as a unit of consciousness and comparable to a singular ray of the sun.

Consequently, they merge along with their different names and attributes, their various appellations such as “gods,” as well as their various meritorious and unmeritorious qualities, into you, the Supreme, meaning Paramātmā, who is referred to by the word “Self” (*sva*) in Śruti texts such as, “he enters into the Self”. (CHU, 6.8.1)

As above [as in the case of the *jīvas*’ coming into existence], illustrations are given in the case of dissolution as well: “as rivers enter into the sea”, and “just as the nectar of unlimited numbers of flowers is dissolved in honey.” The intention here is to say that even though they merge into Him by giving up their names and forms, such as [those of] gods

and human beings, their fundamental distinctness remains due to their being factually existing [irreducible] parts of Paramātmā.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often said the *jīvas* in the material worlds were “rebellious”, and now we can understand that rebelliousness could never have happened in the spiritual world. It is due only to their beginningless indifference towards Kṛṣṇa (*bhagavat-parāṇ-mukha*), and their subsequent eternal association with *prakṛti* and the *guṇas*.

It’s also important to understand that the *nitya-baddha jīvas*’ underlying condition is one of “indifference”, because their consciousness is turned away from Kṛṣṇa. This is opposed to the term, “enviousness”, which is sometimes used to explain their mindset. However, since the *nitya-baddha jīvas* have never seen Kṛṣṇa or associated with Him personally, there is logically no question of them becoming envious. You can’t envy someone you don’t know.

This ends the examination of the *svarūpa* of the *taṭastha-śakti jīvas* as presented in the *Brahma-sūtras* and *Paramātmā Sandarbha*. There are still eight additional attributes of Brahman that are aspects of the *jīva*’s *svarūpa*, which are realized when the *jīva* attains *mukti*. And *Mukti* is the next major section of this treatise.

Mukti – The Realization and Manifestation of the Jīva’s Svarūpa

Before delving directly into the subject of *mukti*, we will first review some misconceptions about *mukti*, along with some astonishing facts that are likely unknown to many devotees.

Misconceptions and Astonishing Details About Liberation

Perhaps the biggest misconception about *mukti* is that it means merging into Brahman (*brahma-jyoti*) and nothing more than that. The fact is that there are literally many millions of *jīvan-muktas* in the material universe, and they are essentially free to do almost anything they desire, being fully liberated from *māyā*'s *avidyā*, *karma*, and the influence of the *guṇas*.

A *jīvan-mukta* is a *jīva* who has attained *mukti* but is still bound to their material body due to remaining *prārabdha-karmas*. When those *karmas* have been experienced and they finally die, they attain eternal liberation according to their specific desires, but while they remain in the material world they can enjoy freely in the higher realms, or anywhere they desire.

Such is the tempting allure of *mukti*, which we will learn more about in the review of the section of the *Brahma-sūtras* dealing with liberation. Jīva Gosvāmī talks about *jīvan-muktas* in *Prīti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 34.

O great sage! Greater than those who are *jīvan-mukta*, and greater than those who attain liberation is the devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Such a devotee, who is in *śānta* or other *rasas*, is extremely rare among ten million people. SB, 6.14.5

Śreyah means *dharma*, actions for attaining happiness in the next life. Among those desiring liberation one may become *jīvan-mukta*. The *jīvan-mukta* who does not commit offense to the Lord is perfect (*sidhyati*). *Sidhyati* means that such a person attains liberation at death.

Take note of the fact stated in the last paragraph that a *jīvan-mukta* can lose their liberated status and come under *Māyā*'s influence again if they commit offenses to the Lord or His devotees. We will learn more about that later on, as well as additional details about *jīvan-muktas* from *Prīti Sandarbha*.

Regarding the millions of *jīvan-muktas* in the universe, here are three references from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, with the commentary of Śrī Madhvācārya, one of the primary *ācāryas* in our *sampradāya*.¹⁷ In this first commentary for Mantra 4.3.9, Śrī Madhvācārya explains that some *muktas* who have not become devotees, and thus have not entered the spiritual world, enter into Mahā Viṣṇu at the time of the final devastation, but they do not lose their liberated status.

¹⁷ Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are understood to be in the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*.

Commentary by Śrī Madhvācārya:

...The phrase, “coming back again” applies to the *muktas* also. At the great dissolution (*pralaya*), the *muktas* enter into the Lord Janārdana [Mahā Viṣṇu], and remaining there during the whole period of *pralaya*, without losing their own consciousness, they come back again out of the Lord, when a new world period (*śṛṣṭi*¹⁸) begins.

Neither during the period of *śṛṣṭi* nor during the great dissolution, is there any loss for the *muktas*, with regard to their knowledge, beatitude, etc. There is no change in their consciousness, as well as in the bliss enjoyed by them, both in creation and dissolution. The difference in the condition of the *muktas* in creation and *pralaya* is this. In *pralaya* they enjoy bliss internally, and in creation they enjoy the same bliss, but now externally.

The status of *jīvan-mukta* is not the same for all of those liberated *jīvas*. There is a hierarchy. This next Mantra provides surprising details regarding the gradations of *jīvan-muktas* in terms of their relative bliss and relative status in the material world.

Mantra 4.3.33

He who amongst men (world-Emperors) is perfect and completely liberated, and [by being a teacher] of other men, has become their over-lord, who is most fully endowed with all human enjoyments, he amongst men has the highest beatitude.

Again, a hundred of these beatitudes of men is one beatitude of the Pitṛis, who have mastered the wisdom (and become *muktas*).

Again, a hundred of these beatitudes of the Pitṛis, who have mastered the wisdom, is one beatitude of the Gandharvas in *mukti*.

Again, a hundred of these beatitudes of the Gandharvas in *mukti*, is one beatitude of the *karma devas*, who attain *deva*-hood through merit (and must consequently be *muktas*).

Again, a hundred of these beatitudes of *karma-devas* is one beatitude of the born-*devas*, who are *śrotriyā* (*muktas*), free from sorrow and untroubled by desires.

Again, a hundred of these beatitudes of born-*devas* is one beatitude of the Prajāpatis (Paśupatis, Rudras, Śeṣas in *mukti*, who are *śrotriyās*, free from sorrow and untroubled by desire).

¹⁸ *Śṛṣṭi* means creation. The manifestation of the material worlds is often referred to as Kṛṣṇa's *śṛṣṭi-līlā*. According to *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.5, *Śṛṣṭi* also a name of Lord Brahmā, the creator.

Again, a hundred of these beatitudes of *Prajāpatīs* in *mukti*, is one beatitude of *Brahmās* in *mukti*, who are *śrotriyās*, free from sorrow and untroubled by desire.

Now (since *Brahmās* and the rest subsist on a fragment of His beatitude), this (Supreme Self) alone is the highest beatitude. This is the perfect Intelligence, O Monarch. Thus spoke Yājñavalkya.

Commentary by Śrī Madhvācārya:

Lest one should mistake that these grades of beatitudes refer to *saṁsārī* or bound *jīvas*, the author shows that they refer to various grades of *muktas*, and not to bound souls.

Therefore, the author says:

The bliss that the *mukta chakravartins* (world-emperors) enjoy is one hundred times greater than that enjoyed by the ordinary *mukta* human beings. The bliss enjoyed by the *Pitṛis* is a hundred-fold greater than that of *mukta chakravartins*.

A hundred times greater than that of the *mukta* *Pitṛis* is the bliss of the *mukta* *Ṛṣis*, called the *karma devas*. A hundred times greater is the bliss of *Umāpati* in his *mukti*, for his bliss is greater than that of a *mukta* *Brahmā* and *mukta* *Garuḍa*.

But the greatest of all is the bliss enjoyed by the Lord Viṣṇu Himself. He is called perfect bliss. Even *Brahmā* in his state of *mukti*, enjoys only a small drop of His bliss, in the shape of a reflection of the bliss of the Lord Viṣṇu. The *muktas* enjoy the bliss of the Lord whilst the others enjoy the shadow of it.

...That the whole passage refers to *muktas*, and not to *saṁsārī jīvas* is clear also from the various words used in it.

An objector says: How can the phrase, “He is endowed with all human enjoyments”, be an attribute of a *mukta*? A *mukta* transcends all human enjoyments, for all worldly enjoyments cease for *muktas*. The author explains this.

The above phrase means that he is more richly endowed in *mukti* with those enjoyments which are the fruits of the acts of good deeds like charity, etc., accomplished with knowledge and performed when he was a human being. For such good deeds are not exhausted, as says the Śruti: Bra Up. I.4.15

...The order therefore of these *muktas* stands thus:

Mukta Chakravartins
Human Gandharvas
Deva-Gandharvas
Pitṛis
Devas along with Gandharvas

Ṛsis
Devas
Indra
Bṛhaspati
The chief Indra called Purandara
Rudra
Brahmā

This is the order of the *muktas*, everyone higher in order has a hundred times the bliss of the one below it. This is also in the same book (*Brahma Tarka*).

Amazingly, there are different gradations of *jīvan-muktas* – it's not all one. And they are all quite obviously not merged in the *brahma-jyoti*. They are enjoying their liberated status in the material universe without being constrained by *karma* or the *guṇas*. In the discussion of *mukti* in the *Brahma-sūtras* we will learn more about the amazing capabilities inherent in the *svarūpa* of all *jīvas*, but only available to *jīvan-muktas*.

Mantra 4.5.15 is the third reference, which is a brief extract from Śrī Madhvācārya's commentary where he explains that *muktas* enjoy in the material world, and he describes the unique bodies of the *muktas*, which have nothing to do with spiritual bodies in the spiritual world.

From Śrī Madhvācārya's commentary:

...All these extracts from Śruti, Smṛti, Itihāsas, and Purāṇas show that even in *nirguṇa mukti*, there are enjoyments after the attainment of such *mukti*.

An objector says: This last extract shows that *muktas* have a body, and so also the extract from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* also shows that the *muktas* have various kinds of enjoyments. On the other hand, there are authorities to the effect that the *muktas* have no body. How do you reconcile them?

To this the commentator answers:

The *muktas* are said to be *aśarīri*, or bodiless, in this sense that they have no bodies consisting of *prakṛtic* matter, namely, of matter consisting of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. Their bodies are of super-matter, namely *cidānanda* matter, or matter consisting merely of intelligence and bliss. The *muktas* have no sense organs, they do not consume any food, and their bodies constantly give out a sweet scent.

Jīvan-muktas are not necessarily *bhaktas*, devotees of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, but some attain *bhakti* after attaining *mukti*. The most notable examples are Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the four Kumaras, who all received *bhakti* some time after they attained *mukti*. Nārada Muni considers Śukadeva Gosvāmī to be a *kṛpā-siddha*. The famous *ātmārāma* verse, SB, 1.7.10, is another indication that some *muktas* eventually become attracted to Kṛṣṇa.

Sūta Gosvāmī said: All different varieties of *ātmārāmas* [those who take pleasure in the *ātmā*, or spirit self], especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls. SB, 1.7.10

Although it is stated that one cannot attain *mukti* without including some *bhakti* in one's *sādhana*, that *bhakti* is often a secondary consideration which is given up after attaining *mukti*. Now we'll examine a series of verses from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* with commentaries by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, where he explains more details about attaining *mukti*, and the reasons *jīvan-muktas* can fall from that exalted status, even when there is some level of *bhakti* involved, strange as that may seem.

In this material world there are as many living entities as atoms. Among these living entities, a few are human beings or *devatās*, and among them, a few practice *dharma*.

O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, out of those who follow *dharma*, only a few desire liberation. Among many thousands who desire liberation, one person becomes a *jīvan-mukta*, and out of many such persons, only one attains the spiritual world.

O great sage! Greater than those who are *jīvan-mukta*, and greater than those who attain liberation, is the devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Such a devotee, who is in *śānta* or other *rasas*, is very rare, even among ten million people. SB, 6.14.3-5

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

It has been said that among the liberated one may attain perfection. Many perform *sādhana* for liberation but do not attain liberation. And all those who attain liberation (*jīvan-mukta*) do not all become perfect. Only some do, for it is said:

*jīvanmuktā api punar bandhanaḥ yānti karmabhiḥ
yady acintya-mahā-śaktau bhagavatyiaparādhinaḥ*

The *jīvan-muktas* again become bound by *karma* if they commit offense to the Lord, possessor of inconceivably great energies. (Quoted as a supplement to *Vāsanā-bhāṣya*.)

Those who attain perfection and get liberation attain *sāyujya*, merging in Brahman. The devotee of Nārāyaṇa is rarer than those liberated persons. The genitive case should here mean the ablative case, since the genitive case will not have a proper meaning. (Among those in *sāyujya* none become devotees.) Compared to the *jīvan-muktas* and the liberated person the devotee of Nārāyaṇa is rare because of his superiority.

Those who finally attain perfection and *sāyujya-mukti*, merge into Brahman eternally. Those *jīvas* never fall from that position because it is eternal. The *jīvas* who fall from the status of *jīvan-mukta*, do so because of *aparādha*. They do not fall directly from the *brahma-jyoti*. When

one attains *sāyujya-mukti* there is no possibility of committing *aparādha* since there are no thoughts or activity when one is merged in Brahman. The commentary continues...

Or one can consider this in another way. There are two types of *jñāna*: pure, and mixed with *bhakti*. By pure *jñāna* those who desire liberation cannot achieve it. It is like beating empty husks for grain:

My dear Lord, devotional service (*bhakti*) unto you is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge (*jñāna*), he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble. SB, 10.14.4

Jñāna mixed with *bhakti* has two types: with *bhakti* in which one does not respect the Lord's form, considering His form material, and with *bhakti* in which one respects the Lord's form, considering it non-material.

By the first type of *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti* one will not attain liberation, but one will think one is liberated. Such *bhakti* destroys ignorance completely but only partly produces knowledge (*vidyā*), and then disappears. (The practitioner thinks *bhakti* must be discarded for attaining liberation.)

But without *bhakti* a person cannot attain complete knowledge of Brahman. Thus he cannot merge into Brahman. This is stated in the *Gītā* and also in *Bhāgavatam* with the following verses:

Persons who are falsely under the impression of being liberated, without devotional service to the Lord, may reach up to the point of liberation, but because of their impure consciousness, such so-called liberated persons again fall down into material existence. SB, 10.2.32

The fools deride Me in this human form, not knowing that I am the great Lord of Brahman, higher than all else. BG, 9.11

Among those who cannot distinguish this truth, those who are devotees do not gain *sālokya*, those who are *karmīs* do not attain their material fruits, and those who are *jñānīs* do not attain liberation. They assume the nature of *rākṣasas* and *asuras*. BG, 9.12

The meaning of the *Gītā* verses is as follows. Fools disrespect Me for having a human form. Seeing all humans with a material body, they think that My body also is made of matter. In this way they disrespect Me. What is My human body? It is the best existence, *viśuddha-sattva*. It is the supreme cause of all *jīvas* from *Brahmā* to the grass. This human body which I have accepted is the cause of all objects made of *prakṛti*.

If they are My devotees but think in this way, then all their desires to attain Me are useless. If they are *karmīs*, then all their *karmas* become useless, and they do not attain

svarga. If they are jñānīs, then the jñāna becomes useless and they do not achieve liberation. Then what do they attain? They are born in the wombs of rākṣasas.

By the second type of *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti*, with belief in the form of the Lord, after the destruction of *vidyā*, (since *vidyā* is also a cause of bondage) by *bhakti* devoid of any mixture of *jñāna*, which does not disappear, a person realizes *tat-padartha* (Brahman) and attains merging in Brahman. It is said:

Having attained the state of Brahman (*brahma-bhūta*), being a pure soul, he does not lament in loss of what he had, nor does he desire what he does not have, and looks upon all beings as equal. He then manifests *prema-bhakti*. BG, 18.54

Only by *bhakti* can a person know Me as Brahman. Then, knowing Me as Brahman by that *bhakti*, he merges with Me. BG, 18.55

However, among those who gain perfection, at the beginning of realizing Brahman some person may attain pure *bhakti* by the mercy of some pure *bhakta*. Then, by gaining the sweetness of *bhakti*, he will find merging tasteless and surrender to the Lord.

In this way the *Bhāgavatam* verse can be explained by taking the genitive meaning. If the devotee giving mercy has *śānta-bhakti*, then the recipient obtains *śānta-bhakti*. *Dāśya* and other types of *bhakti* are also implied here. Since such *bhakti* is rarely attained, the word “thousand” is not used, but rather the word “ten million.”

It is quite remarkable how many nuanced variations there are in the different paths to liberation, and how *bhakti* plays an integral role in each case. And even *bhakti* in these applications has variations in quality and focus which leads to different results. Those variations are due to the different desires and goals of each *jīva*.

Here now is *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 10.2.32, referred to above, with Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary, which provides further clarification regarding those who are not actually liberated, as well as those who may fall from that status.

[Someone may say that aside from devotees, who always seek shelter at the Lord's lotus feet, there are those who are not devotees but who have accepted different processes for attaining salvation. What happens to them? In answer to this question, Lord Brahmā and the other demigods said:]

O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. They fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for Your lotus feet. SB, 10.2.32

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

...Nārada says: Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the infallible (God). (SB, 1.5.12)

The *devatās* here make a similar statement. “Oh lotus-eyed Lord, those who do not accept You have no realization of Your sweetness and merciful glance. They think themselves liberated, *vimukti-māninah*, though they are completely bound in the material world. This is different from Your devotees, who, though liberated, out of humility, regard themselves as conditioned.”

Asta bhāvād means speculation without knowing Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. This means because of a lack of affection for the Lord they think Him to be illusory. As the Lord says in *Gītā*, 9.11: “Only fools regard Me as an ordinary person.” Because of such foolishness, they are called *aviśuddha buddhayaḥ* (impure intelligence). The *jñānīs* are not *viśuddha*, really pure, though they have purified their hearts, having controlled lust and other material urges.

However, by cultivation of knowledge generated from painful practices such as austerity and sense control, the *jñānīs* can attain liberation. It should be understood however, that even the *jñānīs* must possess some mixed *bhakti*, for without that, they cannot attain even liberation in this life.

...Without *bhakti* the goal of *jñāna* becomes like a mirage, and eventually the *jñānī* falls down again into material existence.

...If the *jñānīs* have some type of *bhakti*, how do they fall down? They fall because they think Your lotus feet are material, and therefore do not respect them.

There are two types of *bhakti* practiced as an *aṅga* of *jñāna*. The *jñānīs* practice *bhakti* a little bit, because the scriptures say that *jñāna* cannot be perfected without the touch of *bhakti*. For example, some *jñānīs* worship the deity, but they take it as an illusory form, and thus worship with disrespect. Others simply worship because of material attachment, without disrespect.

The first type adopt extreme austerities, and after a long time, when *bhakti* bestows knowledge to destroy their ignorance, and establishes them on the *brahma-bhūta* platform (liberated state), they stop their practices of *bhakti*. These *jñānīs* are falsely liberated (*vimukti māninah*). They cannot be called *jīvan-mukta*, truly liberated souls.

According to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's statement in the *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* (11.14.21): “Only by executing devotional service can one appreciate Me.” Because of the absence of *bhakti* and the presence of offenses, the *jñānīs* do not attain the direct association of the Lord. Therefore, the burned up seeds of their *karma* again begin to sprout, and such *jñānīs* fall into the material world again.

...The *bhakti* of the second type of *jñānī* brings one to the *brahma-bhūta* platform also, and it extinguishes both knowledge and ignorance. But *bhakti* does not become extinguished. That type of *jñānī* attains the status of *jīvan-mukta* and achieves a direct meeting with the Lord. Such a person is described in the *Bhagavad-gīta*, 18.54: “One who is transcendently situated, at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful.” And in *Bhagavad-gīta*, 18.55: “Only persons engaged in devotional service (*bhakti*) can factually know the transcendental position of the Lord.”

This commentary provided a very detailed analysis of the various mindsets of those seeking liberation, and how some form of *bhakti* is integral for their success. And as always, *bhakti* was shown to be superior to *mukti*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda discussed these *jīvan-muktas* in a number of his purports, and how some of them falsely think they are liberated, while others lose their liberated position due to offenses. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has provided additional details in his commentaries to add more clarity to our understanding of these esoteric complexities, which is precisely why Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended studying the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas*.

Lastly, we will examine details from the *Brahma-sūtras* explaining that final liberation is dependent on various remaining *karmas*. As usual, there are exceptions. First, from Chapter 3.

Topic 16 – Time of Liberation

The author shows that with the acquisition of *vidyā*, liberation will necessarily follow. Śruti says, *tam eva vidvān amṛta iha bhavati*: knowing (realizing) the Lord one attains immortality in this life. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.17) *tam eva viditvātīmṛtyum eti*: knowing the Lord, one surpasses death. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8)

The doubt is this. Will liberation occur when leaving this body in which *vidyā* arose, or will it occur in the next body?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) He will obtain liberation in this life after leaving the body since the effect must follow the cause.

There is no fixed rule when liberation will occur, since it depends on the remaining *prārabdha-karmas*. BS, 3.4.52

It is not a rule that the person desiring liberation, who is equipped with *sādhana* to attain *vidyā*, will attain *vidyā* in this life. It will happen after the destruction of the obstacles. Similarly, it is not a rule that a person who has attained *vidyā* will attain the result, liberation, in this life when he leaves the body.

It will occur after the destruction of *prārabdha-karmas*. If there are no *prārabdha karmas*, then when he leaves this body (the last *prārabdha-karma*) he will attain liberation. If there are remaining *prārabdha-karmas* then he will obtain liberation in the next life.

Liberation cannot play favorites. Why? Because the condition of liberation for the realized persons is determined to be after the destruction of *prārabdha-karmas*.

One who has a teacher knows the truth. As long as he has *karma*, he will not be liberated. With the exhaustion of *karmas*, he achieves the result. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.14.2

Smṛti says: One should not doubt that a person who knows the Lord will attain Him. When the *prārabdha-karmas* are finished he will attain the Lord. If his *prārabdha karmas* are not finished, after many births he will attain the Lord. There is no doubt about this. *Nārāyaṇa ādhyātmā*

It has already been said that even though all *karmas* will be destroyed by *vidyā*, by the will of the Lord some portion of *prārabdha* may remain. This will also be explained later.

Here are additional details about the destruction of *karmas* from Chapter 4 of the *Brahma-sūtras*.

Topic 10 – Destruction of *Aprārabdha-karmas*

The body should be immediately destroyed by *vidyā* since the *karmas* of piety and sin which created this body have been destroyed. Then there would be no one to teach *vidyā* in the world. To refute this doubt, a new topic begins. The accumulated sinful and pious *karmas* are of two types: *anārabdha* (*aprārabdha*) and *ārabdha* (*prārabdha*). Are both types destroyed or are only the sinful and pious results of the *anārabdha* destroyed?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) Since no distinction was made in the Śruti statement quoted above, *ubhe u haiva*, both types are destroyed, since *vidyā* acts equally on both.

The *anārabdha-karmas* are destroyed but the *prārabdha-karmas* remain, because that is the conclusion of Śruti. BS, 4.1.15

The word *tu* indicates refutation of the doubt. The *anārabdha* effects, of previous sin and piety, not designated to appear in the present life, are destroyed. The *ārabdha* effects of sin and piety give their results in this life.

Why? Because of the conclusion of Śruti. *tasya tāvad eva ciraṁ yāvan na vimokṣye*: as long as the body lasts, he is not liberated. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.14.2)

Smṛti says: When a person realizes You, he no longer cares about his good and bad fortune arising from past pious and sinful acts, since it is You alone who control this good and bad fortune. SB, 10.87.40

The above verse indicates that the body continues to exist until the *prārabdha-karmas* are destroyed (by experiencing), by the will of the Lord. What is said is this. *Vidyā*, being most powerful, burns up all *karmas* without distinction just as a blazing fire consumes all types of fuel.

Though this is seen in the scriptures, by the will of the Lord who desires to spread the teachings, the ārabdha-karmas remain, since we see those who have realized Brahman remaining in their bodies. There is no fault if vidyā does not burn all karmas. It is like a fire which, though capable of burning everything, is counteracted by gems.

Some say that vidyā cannot arise without taking shelter of the stock of ārabdha results (happiness and distress in the body). Having taken shelter of karma, vidyā becomes dependent on the force of karmas, which is like the turning of a potter's wheel. Vidyā's appearance depends on the destruction of that force. Just as the wheel stops turning when the force is dissipated by itself, ārabdha-karmas are destroyed when their results are experienced.

That proposal is not true. There can be no obstacle to vidyā since it is most powerful, able to uproot all karma. It uproots everything except the will of the Lord. The potter's wheel cannot move if a heavy stone is dropped on it. Thus what was previously stated is true.

Only certain karmas are destroyed by vidyā (bhakti). This arrangement is made by Kṛṣṇa so that liberated jīvan-muktas and advanced devotees can teach others, and they also represent visible examples of what jīvas can attain.

Now we will see that sometimes Kṛṣṇa makes exceptions for very dear devotees, i.e., nirapekṣas¹⁹ – devotees on the path of rāgānuga-bhakti, aspiring for a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in vraja-līlā. We'll start with the last part of the commentary from sūtra 4.1.16.

It has been shown that by the will of the Lord the prārabdha-karmas of the man with knowledge (realization) remain so that teaching vidyā continues. It is now shown that the prārabdha of some nirapekṣas is destroyed without their having to experience the sinful or pious results.

It is said, *tat-sukṛta-duṣkṛte vidhunute tasya priyā jñātayaḥ sukṛtam upayānty apriyā duṣkṛtam*: his pious and sinful reactions are destroyed – his pious results go to his dear friends or relatives and the sinful results go to the sinful. (Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad 1.4)

tasya putrā dāyam upayanti suhṛdaḥ sādhu-kṛtyām dviṣantaḥ pāpa-kṛtyām: his children receive his inheritance, his friends receive his pious results and his enemies receive his sinful results. (Sāma-veda-jaiminiya-brāhmaṇa 1.18.27)

The doubt is this. Can both types of prārabdha, from sin and piety, be destroyed without experiencing them?

¹⁹ nirapekṣaṁ munirṁ śāntaṁ nirvairam sama-darśanam anuvrajāmy aham nityaṁ pūyeyety aṅghri-reṇubhiḥ

I always follow the footsteps of my pure devotees, who are free from all personal desire, are rapt in thought of My pastimes, are fixed in Me, without any feelings of enmity, and are equal to all conditions of the world. Let Me be purified by the dust from their feet! SB, 11.14.16

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) The *prārabdha-karmas* will not be destroyed since it is their very nature that they should be experienced.

For some *nirapekṣa* devotees both types of *prārabdha-karmas* are dissolved because this is stated in some Śrutis. BS, 4.1.17

The sinful and pious *prārabdhās* both, without having to experience them, are dissolved for some *nirapekṣas* who are absorbed in Brahman and are most anxious for the Lord, because other Śrutis of some branches of the Vedas – the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* and the *Sātyayanis* say this, as opposed to the Śrutis which say that by the will of the Lord the *prārabdha-karmas* remain.

The meaning is this. One must consider that the conflicting statements have different persons (some *nirapekṣas* in this case) in mind in order to reconcile the above statements (in which the person's *prārabdhās* are transferred to others) with śrutis saying that *karma* is destroyed by knowledge (*aprārabdha*) and enjoyment (*prārabdha*).

Kāmya-karmas performed in this life never become transferred *karmas*, since all *karmas* sinful or pious except *prārabdha-karmas* (ie. all *aprārabdha karmas* and actions performed in the present life) are destroyed according to *sūtras* 4.1.13 and 4.1.14 and one would not perform *kāmya-karmas* to receive sinful results (to be given to an enemy).

What is said in this *adhikaraṇa* is that the Lord, unable to tolerate delay in meeting the dearest devotees, who long to see Him, brings the devotees to Him after giving the *prārabdhās* to his sons or relatives. Since the *karmas* should be experienced, the Lord's arrangement remains intact by having the sons or relatives experience the pious results.

"It is not correct to say that the results get transferred to another person, because pious and sinful reactions do not have a concrete form that can be given to another person, and others would receive results for which they performed no action."

This is not so because the Lord, by His power, can make other arrangements for *karmas*. Thus for some *nirapekṣas*, the *prārabdha-karmas* get dissolved without having to experience them. The objection that the *karmas* of a *nirapekṣa* devotee cannot go to other persons is refuted.

Surprisingly, good and bad *karmas* may be transferred by the Lord to one's friends or relatives and enemies respectively. For additional confirmation and clarification, here is Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's translation and commentary on this verse from his *Brahma-Sūtra-kārikā-bhāṣyam*.

There is another Śruti that states that both the manifest and non manifest reactions of the *rāgānuga* devotees are all destroyed. BS, 4.1.17

Now the distinction of the *rāgānuga* devotees is shown. Both the manifest and non-manifest pious and sinful reactions of those who have spontaneous love Lord Kṛṣṇa are

destroyed without being experienced, for these are the statements found in other Śrutis apart from those which state that the reactions are destroyed after being enjoyed.

In this section, we have learned that *mukti* is not just one condition of merging in Brahman. It is much more complex and nuanced. There are many millions of *jīvan-muktas* of various levels in the material universe enjoying their freedom, which is why *mukti* is attractive to many who are not yet devotees but who desire liberation from material bondage. Now we will examine the true and illusory nature of that bondage.

The Jīva's Apparent Bondage

Our examination of *mukti* includes a seemingly contradictory notion – that the *jīva's* bondage is not real, only *apparent*. Śrīla Prabhupāda often said (paraphrasing), “We are already liberated, we’re just covered, like a person dreaming.” This perspective is explained in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, *Anucchedas* 91-92.

However, before we examine those *Anucchedas*, there is another serious misconception to address. Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements about the *jīva* only dreaming it is in bondage have led to a bizarre speculative theory, which has been dubbed, “The *Jīva* Fall Asleep Theory”.

This theory hypothesizes that all of the unlimited *jīvas* in the unlimited material universes are in actuality currently located in the spiritual world – and they are asleep, merely dreaming all of their intricately interconnected *karmic* experiences in the material worlds!

When these sleeping *jīvas* become pure devotees “in their dreams”, they will wake up in their pre-existing eternal identities and immediately remember their lost relationship with Kṛṣṇa. They will then just pick up where they left off before they fell asleep – a long long time ago.

I wish I was joking, but sadly I’m not. The Ph.D. author of this speculative nonsensical notion admitted openly in his presentation that he didn’t bother to study any of the books of the previous *ācāryas* to verify his concocted ideas.

He stated that he didn’t feel it was necessary since Śrīla Prabhupāda “gave us everything in his books” from the previous *ācāryas*. And so the author engaged in unbridled conjecture about the esoteric meaning of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements, which resulted in this most absurd *apasiddhānta*.

Here is the correct understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements, readily available to everyone by studying the books of the previous *ācāryas*. From *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

Anuccheda 91 – The Jīva’s Bondage Is Not Real

Śrī Maitreya again establishes with the help of an example that in reality the *jīva* does not undergo such circumstances [i.e., the loss of inherent consciousness and bondage] in its own essential nature, but appears to be subject to them only because of Bhagavān’s *māyā*:

[It is because of this *māyā*] that the self assumes a positionality that is contrary to its inherent nature, just as it appears to a witness of the dream state that he has been beheaded and other similar contradictions, even though such dream cognitions are without reality. (SB, 3.7.10)

Here the pronoun *yat* (which) stands for the ablative singular of cause [referring to *māyā*], meaning “on account of *māyā*.” [The loss of inherent identity and bondage of the pure self appear to be the case] even though they are without factual substance.

Even though the *jīva* does not [in truth] undergo any such experience in the three phases of time [past, present, and future], it assumes a positionality that is contrary to its inherent nature, namely, forgetting its own true self, becoming identified with something other, and adopting the empirical “I”-sense of being a conditional self endowed with phenomenal characteristics.

This situation is exactly like that of the seer in the dream state. The word *upadraṣṭuh* (“of the witness”) means “of the *jīva*,” or “by the *jīva*,” as the genitive case in this instance is being used for the instrumental. In the dream state, a completely impossible effect, such as seeing one’s own head being chopped off, appears to be experienced by the *jīva*.

Certainly his head is not being cut off, nor can anyone witness his own beheading. Rather, it is Bhagavān’s *māyā*, which superimposes such an effect occurring to some other person in some other circumstance on the witness itself of such an event in the dream state. As is said: “Dream objects are, however, products of *māyā* alone, because they are not perceived by anyone other than the dreamer” (BS, 3.2.3)

Clearly, the dream notion is nothing more than a convenient *analogy* – it is not actual *reality*. The *jīva*’s position in bondage has *similarities* to a dream, but it is not literally a dream, as wrongly concluded in the article referred to above. Now Śrī Jīva explains how the *jīva*’s bondage is apparent only.

Anuccheda 92 – The Jīva’s Apparent Bondage

Therefore, Maitreya uses another example to establish that though the *jīva* is pure, it takes on adjunctive characteristics only by virtue of its conditioned state:

Just as the shimmering of the moon observed in water comes about due to the attributes of the water, so the attributes of the non-self [i.e., the body] seem to belong to the self, the witness, although they do not [factually] exist in it. SB, 3.7.11

Properties, such as shimmering and so on, produced by the attributes of water, are observed only in the reflection of the moon in water and not in the original moon situated in the sky. In the same way, the properties of the non-self in the form of the material adjuncts, though not existing in the pure self, are taken on by it only as a witness situated in the subtle body, namely, the false sense of self.

This simulated or apparent “I”-sense is here compared to a reflection arising from identification with the *māyā*-created adjuncts, caused by absorption in the notion that “I am verily this [body, etc.].” This indicates that the pure self nevertheless perceives those properties as non-different from itself.

...Similarly, it was said, “The pure knower of the presentational field merely looks upon (*vicaṣṭe*) these beginningless modifications of the impure actor, the mind” (SB, 5.11.12, *Anuccheda* 1). Here the intent of the prefix *vi* [in *vicaṣṭe*] is this absorption [in its material identity].

Therefore, the conclusion is that because Bhagavān has supremely powerful, inconceivable intrinsic potencies that belong to His essential nature, He is not affected by *māyā*, His extrinsic potency, even though it too is powerful and inconceivable. It is concluded, however, that the *jīva* is affected by *māyā*.

The covering of the subtle and gross material bodies is illusory, i.e., these bodies of matter never actually contact the spiritual *jīva* directly. They simply cover the *jīva*’s knowledge of its spiritual nature with a veil of subtle but very strong and inconceivable illusion. The analogy of the moon reflected in water is given to help us understand that the material changes are all external to the *jīva*, and not actually happening directly to the *jīva*.

In the Eleventh Canto, Kṛṣṇa explains to Uddhava that there is no real bondage or liberation. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura elaborates and clarifies.

The Lord said: One cannot actually say that there is bondage or liberation due to the *guṇas* controlled by Me. Because the relationship with the *guṇas* arises only by *avidyā* or ignorance, there is no real bondage, and consequently no liberation. That is my opinion. SB, 11.11.1

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

...At the end of the last chapter Uddhava inquired about the liberated and conditioned *jīvas*. Now the Lord explains that the question does not arise.

It is impossible to say that a *jīva* is bound by the *guṇas* which are dependent on Me, or that the *jīva* is liberated from them. Why? It arises by the inconceivable energy called *avidyā*, related to the *guṇas*.

Thus it is only an appearance of a relationship with the *guṇas*, body and senses, a relationship difficult to accomplish. This is My opinion. There is no bondage, and therefore there is no liberation, since there is no bondage from which to be liberated.

Just as a dream is merely a creation of one's intelligence but has no actual substance, similarly, material lamentation, illusion, happiness, distress and the acceptance of another material body take place by *avidyā*, and are not based on reality. SB, 11.11.2

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

He explains how bondage is illusory. *Dehāpattiḥ* means “acceptance of another body after giving up a body,” or “death of the body.” Acceptance of a body takes place by *avidyā*, by a relationship with a conditioning produced by *māyā*. This conditioning arises only from identification of the *jīva* with his subtle body or *antaḥkaraṇa*.

Because of this identification one accepts the qualities of the subtle body – lamentation, illusion, happiness and distress – as one's own qualities. Thus *samsāra*, consisting of identity with lamentation and illusion, is not based on reality.

Though lamentation and illusion actually exist as the creations of *māyā*, their relation with the *jīva* is false, produced by *avidyā*. This is like the transformation of one's intelligence to produce a dream, which is false.

The *jīva*'s material bodies and subsequent experiences of suffering and enjoyment are all real creations of *māyā*, i.e., they are not “illusory dream objects”. The *jīva*'s identification with and acceptance of these bodies and experiences is the false illusion, and similar to a dreaming. This is explained further in the next verse and commentary.

O Uddhava! Understand that *vidyā* and *avidyā* are My *śaktis*. They are created by My *māyā*, are without beginning, and create liberation and bondage for the living beings. SB, 11.11.3

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

“What is this *avidyā*, by which the *jīva* develops a false relationship with the *guṇas*?” Both *vidyā* and *avidyā* are My *śaktis*, by which liberation and bondage are produced. *Vidyā* produces liberation and *avidyā* produces bondage for the embodied beings. These are created by My great *śakti*, *māyā*. Moreover, because they are aspects of *māyā*, metaphorically, they are said to be created by *māyā*. But they are without beginning.

...Like *māyā*, her modes, *vidyā* and *avidyā*, are eternal. *Māyā* thus has three modes: *pradhāna*, *avidyā*, and *vidyā*. *Pradhāna* creates the coverings (*upādhis* – subtle and gross bodies), which are real. *Avidyā* creates the imposition of the body, which is false. *Vidyā* destroys the false identity. These are the three products of *māyā*.

O intelligent Uddhava! The bondage of the *jīva*, who is my one part or *tatastha-śakti*, by *avidyā*, is without beginning. By *vidyā*, he achieves liberation which has a beginning. SB, 11.11.4

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

Bondage and liberation of My *śakti*, the *jīva*, which are apparent only, is caused by My *avidyā-śakti*, which produces the imposition of the body, and liberation is produced by My *vidyā-śakti* which removes the imposition of the body. This is brought about under the influence of My *śakti* which functions for the pastime of creation and destruction of the universe. That is explained in this verse.

...The *jīva-śakti* or *tatastha-śakti* is one, but from its many expansions appear many *jīvas*. Similarly, the one external energy called *māyā-śakti* has two aspects *avidyā* and *vidyā*, which affect many *jīvas* by expansion into many functions. Just as all the expansions of *māyā* are simply called *māyā*, so all the expansions of the *jīva-śakti* are called *jīva*. The many expansions of the *jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti* should be understood to be eternal.

The *jīva* is eternal, but by *vidyā* the *jīva* becomes liberated. It is said that when *avidyā* is destroyed the *jīva* attains liberation. But “destruction” simply means that *avidyā* ceases its influence on a particular *jīva* (since *avidyā* is eternal). Liberation or *nirvāṇa* means the *jīva* merges in Brahman. The *jīva* is not destroyed. *Sāyujya* means “joining with Brahman.” In that condition, the *jīva*’s *svarūpa* is not destroyed.

The Lord has a superior energy, another energy called the *jīva* and a third energy, the material energy, called *avidyā-karma*. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. 6.7.61

The *jīva-śakti* exists in various conditions in various bodies by the *māyā-śakti*.

From the statement of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, it is understood that the *jīva-śakti* is generally controlled by *māyā-śakti* for accomplishing the pastime of creation of the universe. That is stated in the verse. The *jīva* is bound by *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is beginningless because *karma* is beginningless. When liberation takes place, *avidyā* has an end for that particular *jīva*. Liberation, because it is produced, has a beginning. But because it is indestructible, it has no end.

Karma has no beginning, since there was no “first creation”. It is eternal, but it can end if the *jīva* attains some form of *mukti* – liberation. That liberation has a beginning in time, but no end. It is eternal.

These concepts may require some serious deliberation time to fully comprehend. Even though “technically”, there is no bondage or liberation, nonetheless, the subject of *mukti* is discussed in detail in the *Brahma-sūtras*, and *Prīti Sandarbha*, and that is the next topic for examination.

Brahma-sūtras – Mukti

Following the same pattern as our study of the *jīva's svarūpa*, we'll start by examining the *Brahma-sūtras*, specifically the fourth and last chapter, and its last section (*pāda*), 4. This section discusses the details regarding the eight attributes of Brahman inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*. As before, all commentaries are by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa.

This first *sūtra* has been used by some inherency proponents as proof that the *jīva's svarūpa* includes their eternal *līlā* body. But this mistaken notion will be corrected later in this section where it states that a liberated *jīva* can choose to have a body or not, and for those who wish to serve the Lord eternally, a suitable body manifests by the arrangement of the *cit-śakti* (*svārūpa-śakti*). Additional confirming statements will be provided. In this *sūtra*, “one’s own form” simply refers to the *jīva's svarūpa* – not one’s eternal *līlā* form.

Also, in Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s, *Brahma-Sūtra-kārikā-bhāṣyam*, he clearly states that this verse means Kṛṣṇa gives the *jīva* a spiritual body – it is not inherent in their *svārūpa*.

Topic 1 – The Manifestation of the Jīva's Svarūpa

...In this *pāda* of Chapter Four, after the author defines the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*, the enjoyment and powers of the liberated souls are described. It is said:

Receiving mercy, rising from his body, he attains the supreme light and manifests with his own form. The Lord is the supreme person. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.3

The doubt is this. In manifesting this form, is there a relationship of the *ātmā* with this body like that of a *devatā's* body, as a result of *sādhana*, or is it manifestation of what is naturally present in the *ātmā*?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It arises as a result of *sādhana* since the word used is *abhiniṣpatti*: to attain. Otherwise this word would be meaningless. The scriptures dealing with liberation would not be teaching a goal, for if this form were naturally related to the *ātmā*, being a manifestation only, there would be no attainment, since the natural *svārūpa* would have been previously present. Thus the form must be achieved by practice.

The *jīva* manifests his *svārūpa* on attaining the Lord since the word “his own” is used.
BS, 4.4.1

It is said in the text that when the *jīva* has attained the supreme light (the Lord) by *bhakti*, which is served by *jñāna* and *vairagya*, there is a manifestation of a particular situation characterized by the arousal of his *svārūpa* endowed with eight qualities when he is freed from the bondage of *karma*.

Why is this the meaning? Because of the word *svena*, which modifies *rūpena*. This indicates his natural form. If he were to receive a new form, the word would have no

meaning, since having his own form can only be accomplished by not obtaining a new form. The word *abhiniṣpadyate* is not meaningless since it means "manifested" in sentences like *idam ekam suniṣpannam*: this one has appeared nicely.

One cannot argue that because this form existed previously it cannot be recognized as a goal of human life, for it had not previously made its appearance in this special condition of showing eight qualities. The method of attainment is not useless because it becomes successful in producing the manifestation of these qualities.

Some say that the *jīva*, being self-illuminating consciousness alone, on attaining the supreme light, manifests merely a state of destruction of all suffering caused by the superimposition of *prakṛti*. But that is not so, because Śruti states that one attains intense bliss. *rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandi bhavati*: the *jīva*, attaining the Lord who is *rasa*, becomes blissful. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7)

Here is the same *sūtra* and commentary from Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's *Brahma-Sūtra-kārikā-bhāṣyam*.

Having attained the supreme abode, one's divine body becomes manifest by the will of Kṛṣṇa, as stated in the Śruti. BS, 4.4.1

Now the divine body and enjoyment of a *rāgānuga* devotee who has attained Kṛṣṇa are described, which are all caused by His desire. By Kṛṣṇa's will, the transcendental body and transcendental enjoyment of a *rāgānuga* devotee who has attained Him then become manifest. So is the description found in the Śruti, "Then one enjoys all pleasures accompanied by the Supreme Lord."

The meaning is very clear, and we will see more corroborating evidence in the upcoming *sūtras* and commentaries.

Topic 2 – Liberation

"How is liberation to be understood for the *jīva* who has approached the supreme light?"

Liberation means manifestation of *jīva's svarūpa*, because that is promised. BS, 4.4.2

Liberation is the manifestation of the *jīva's svarūpa*. Why? Because this is promised. Prajāpati had promised to explain the *jīva*, starting with *ya ātmā*, which is liberated from the three conditions of waking, dream, and deep sleep, free of the body produced by *karma* causing happiness and distress.

He makes the final promise *etaṁ tv eva te bhūyo 'nuvyākhyāsyami*: I will explain again to you only this, the true self. He then explains in the passage quoted above about the *jīva* manifesting his own form. Therefore liberation is the manifestation of the *jīva's svarūpa*, a natural state of the *svarūpa* freed from the body produced by a relationship with *karma*.

Topic 3 – The Lord as Light

It is stated that after approaching the supreme light one's *svaṛūpa* manifests. Something should be considered here. The doubt is this. Is that supreme light the sun globe or the supreme Brahman?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It is the sun globe for it is said that after piercing the sun globe one attains Brahman. The sun was mentioned on the path starting with light.

The supreme light is the Lord since that is understood from the context. BS, 4.4.3

The supreme light is the Lord not the sun globe. Why? Because of the context.

...That supreme light which is approached is the supreme person, the Lord.

In this next *sūtra*, the term *sāyujya* is used to indicate intimate association with Kṛṣṇa, as opposed to its usually understood meaning, i.e., merging in Brahman.

Topic 4 – Intimate Association

Now something else should be considered. Does the liberated *jīva* on attaining the supreme light situated in the city called *Saṁvyoma* simply dwell [in] the same [realm] (*sālokya*) as the Lord or does he join with Him intimately (*sāyujya*)?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) He resides [in] the same [realm] as the Lord, as one sees a person enter the king's city and reside there.

The *jīva* and the Lord attain *sāyujya*, intimate association, since that is seen in the scriptures. BS, 4.4.4

One should understand that the *jīva*, on attaining the Lord, remains united with Him. Why? Because that is seen.

Just as flowing rivers, giving up name and form, disappear in the ocean, so the man in knowledge, freed from name and form, attains the supreme shining person. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.8

Sāyujya means coming together.

The wise man who dies during the northern course of the sun, going to the great *devatās*, attains *sāyujya* with the sun. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*

Though there are other types of liberation (*sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sārūpya*, and *sāmīpya*), these are special types of *sāyujya*. This state of *sāyujya* is not lost during separation from the Lord since the Lord is with the devotee internally by his great power.

One should not think that the *svārūpa* of the Lord and the *jīva* are identical by citing the example of the rivers flowing into the sea, since internally there remains difference in the water though the water has become one. Otherwise there would not be an increase in the water when the rivers entered the ocean.

The explanation of *sāyujya* given above is not the meaning most devotees are familiar with. We'll read more about *sāyujya-mukti* – merging in Brahman – later on from *Prīti Sandarbha*. Next, the discussion in the *Brahma-sūtras* focuses on the eight qualities of Brahman that are inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*, namely:

1. Freedom from sin
2. Freedom from thirst
3. Freedom from death
4. Freedom from old age
5. Freedom from hunger
6. Freedom from lamentation
7. The ability to instantly fulfill any desires - *satya-kāma*
8. The ability to instantly fulfill one's will - *satya-saṅkalpa*

Opinions about these qualities in the *jīva's svarūpa* are now given by Jaimini and Auḍulomi, and then reconciled by Bādarāyana (Śrīla Vyāsadeva).

Topic 5 – Eight Qualities of Brahman

The author will describe the enjoyments of the liberated *jīva*, but first he will determine the spiritual form (*vigraha*) with an aggregate of qualities like *satya-saṅkalpa*, which are the cause of his enjoyment. In this description, first the qualities will be defined.

Does the *jīva* who attains the supreme light (the Lord) somehow manifest a *svārūpa* endowed with many qualities, or is the *jīva's svarūpa* simply consciousness itself, or does the *jīva* manifest a *svārūpa* of qualities and pure consciousness, since there is no contradiction between the two? Jaimini's opinion follows.

Jaimini says that the *jīva* manifests the eight qualities of *Brahman* because these qualities are mentioned in Śruti. BS, 4.4.5

The *jīva* manifests with many qualities (*brāhmeṇa* – that which is produced by the Lord) starting with freedom from sin and ending with accomplishing whatever it wills. Why? Because Prajāpati mentions these qualities of the *jīva*. *Ādibhiḥ* indicates actions of the liberated *jīva* related to those qualities such as eating and playing. Because of these scriptural statements, Jaimini believes that the *svārūpa* of the liberated *jīva* simply manifests with endowment of these qualities.

Smṛti also says: Just as by washing away dirt, light is not created in a jewel, so by destroying faults, knowledge is not created in the *jīva*.

Just as water is not created by digging a well, an existing thing becomes manifest. How can something not existing appear?

Similarly by destruction of bad qualities, the obscured qualities, which are eternal in the *ātmā*, manifest and are not created. *Viṣṇu-dharma*

Attaining Brahman, the *jīva* manifests his *svarūpa* as pure consciousness alone, since this is stated in Śruti. This is the opinion of Auḍulomi. BS, 4.4.6

When ignorance is destroyed by knowledge of Brahman, a person becomes liberated, and, attaining Brahman, pure consciousness, manifests as consciousness alone.

Why? In the second story of Maitreyī in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.13, it is said: just as a mass of salt has not interior or exterior and is completely consisting of taste, so the *ātmā* has no interior or exterior and is completely consisting of knowledge alone.

It is understood from this that the *ātmā* is consciousness alone. Thus it is understood that the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is consciousness with no qualities. The words describing eight qualities starting with absence of sin should be understood to be placed in the passage merely to exclude the qualities like change and material happiness which arise from *avidyā*. This is Auḍulomi's opinion.

Now the author's view is given.

Though the *jīva* is pure consciousness, this is not contrary to the Śruti stating that the *jīva* has eight qualities. This is the view of Bādarāyaṇa. BS, 4.4.7

Though the *jīva*'s *svarūpa* has been defined as pure consciousness, this is not contradictory to the *jīva*'s *svarūpa* having eight qualities. This is the view of Lord Bādarāyaṇa. Why? Because of proof in the form of Prajāpati's words used by Jaimini, in the first opinion, which proved that the *ātmā* manifested eight qualities.

The conclusion is that the *jīva* has both forms because the proofs given by Jaimini and Auḍulomi are of equal strength, since the statements are not qualified in any way. Because Śruti says the *jīva* is *prajñāna-ghana eva*, consciousness, Bādarāyaṇa accepts that the *jīva*'s *svarūpa* is consciousness without qualities because he says this view is not contradictory to the *jīva* having eight qualities.

The word *prajñāna-ghana eva* does not mean "only consciousness and nothing else." It is clear from the passage that the intention of the word *eva* is only to deny insentience absolutely in the *jīva* which is self-illuminating.

The *jīva* having eight qualities, understood from the other Śruti, is not contrary to the *jīva* being pure consciousness. Qualities like hardness and form perceived by the eye or other senses are not contrary to the salt being full of taste. Therefore in the liberated state the *jīva* manifests as a *svarūpa* of knowledge, endowed with eight qualities.

The last sentence is important because it confirms that the *jīva*'s *svarūpa* does not include a spiritual body suitable for *līlā*. It is “a *svarūpa* of knowledge, endowed with eight qualities”.

One of the major enticements of *mukti* is the manifestation of the two attributes, *satya-saṅkalpa* and *satya-kāma* – instant fulfillment of one's will and desires, along with everything that those astonishing capabilities imply.

Topic 6 – Fulfillment of Will

Now the ability of the liberated *jīva* to will anything to happen (*satya-saṅkalpa*) is discussed. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.12.3) it is said: the liberated *jīva* moves, eats, and plays, enjoying with women, vehicles and relatives.

The doubt is this. Does his attaining relatives etc. take place by making efforts or by his will alone which makes it happen?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) He attains these things by his will assisted by his efforts, since one sees that there is dependence on effort of kings or others to fulfill their will even though they are said to be *satya-saṅkalpa*.

The liberated *jīva* attains things by his will alone, since that is stated in Śruti. BS, 4.4.8

The liberated *jīva* attains these things by will alone. Why? Because of statements to that effect in Śruti. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.2.1) it is stated that he attains various persons by his will alone. It is said: if he desires persons from *Pitṛloka*, those persons arrive; endowed with *Pitṛloka* he is happy.

If it were not so, the word *eva* (only) in the phrase *saṅkalpād eva* would be contradicted. In the phrase *prajñāna-ghana eva* of *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the word *eva* has a different meaning since there are statements in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* stating the eight qualities. In the present case however, we do not see other statements which make the will dependent upon effort.

This type of liberation, predominated by one's own happiness and powers however, is not desired by devotees who are greedy for the taste of *rasa* in service. Thus there are statements condemning this type of liberation.

Topic 7 – Control By Others In a Liberated State

The author now shows that the liberated *jīva* with the quality of *satya-saṅkalpa* depends on the Lord alone.

The doubt is this. Is the liberated *jīva* controlled by anyone except the Lord?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) He is controlled by others, not the Lord, since he goes to someone else's place, for if one goes to the king's palace, one is ordered by persons other than the king. Similarly, in going to the Lord's abode, one is ordered by the Lord's associates.

Because of the Lord's mercy and the *jīva*'s nature of *satya-saṅkalpa*, the liberated *jīva* has no master except the Lord. BS, 4.4.9

Because of the manifestation of the Lord's mercy and because of the *jīva*'s *satya-saṅkalpa* nature alone, the liberated *jīva* has no other master than the Lord. Taking shelter of the Lord alone, he plays.

Otherwise, if he had another master, he would be in a situation similar to that in the material world. Though the *jīva*'s nature of *satya-saṅkalpa* exists within himself, it manifests because of his worship of the Lord. Thus the devotee enjoys while at the same time recognizing the mercy of the Lord full of unlimited bliss, who is affectionate to those who take shelter of Him.

The Lord also gives bliss to the liberated *jīva*. That will be explained in *sūtra* 4.4.20. Since the *jīva* is an *aṁśa* of the Lord (dependent on Him) his nature of being an agent and enjoyer comes from the Lord alone. That was previously shown.

Another meaning is as follows. Because the liberated *jīva* has *satya-saṅkalpa*, he has no other master: he is not restricted by injunctions or prohibitions. The injunctions and prohibitions would destroy his nature of *satya-saṅkalpa*.

Now we'll take a short diversion from the *Brahma-sūtras*. *Chandogya Upaniṣad* is regularly referenced in the *Brahma-sūtras*, being a key Śruti text. Here are several remarkable references from *Chandogya Upaniṣad* with commentary by Śrī Madhvācārya, regarding *satya-kāma* and the status of a *jīva* who is on the threshold of *mukti*.

Mantra 8.3.1

Since these true desires are hidden by a covering of ignorance, therefore, though the desires of the good are always true (yet their manifestation is prevented), because there is the covering of ignorance. Therefore, whatever (relation of this *jīva*, who has not yet obtained *mukti*) goes from this world to the next, does not come within the scope of his vision. Even if he desires to see him.

Commentary by Śrī Madhvācārya:

An objector says, “Now this power called *satya-kāma*, namely having all his desires fulfilled, is it accidental and adventitious with regard to the released soul? It cannot be accidental for release is defined to be a state in which there is nothing adventitious. Nor is it a natural and innate condition of the soul to be a *satya-kāma*. For if it were so, then all the desires of non-freed souls would also become true.”

To this we reply that the desires of every soul deserving release (*mukti*) are such that they will come to be true at some time or another. His every desire is really a true desire, but its manifestation is prevented, because there is a covering of falsehood. This falsehood or ignorance prevents the manifestation of the will. Therefore this unreleased soul, who is on the path of release, does not at once find his desires realized. So if his ancestors die and even if he desires to see them, he cannot see them, because of this covering of ignorance.

Mantra 8.3.2

As regards the non-released soul of the deserving, all his desires exist in perfect fruition in the world of Brahman, whether they relate to those who are living in this world or have departed hence, and whatever else he desires but does not obtain now, he obtains them when he goes there. Here, verily all his desires become realized. (But before his release they were still existing in thought forms) but covered by ignorance (and hence he did not see them).

Just as some golden treasure may be hidden under ground, but the people, who do not know the spot where it is hidden, may pass over it again and again, without discovering it; exactly like this are all these creatures, who go day after day (in their deep sleep), to this world of Brahman, but do not discover Brahman, because their sight is covered by the veil of ignorance.

Mantra 8.3.5

There are verily these three syllables in the word *satyam*, namely *sat*, *ti*, *yam*. That which is the syllable *sat* signifies the immortal (the released souls). That which is the syllable *ti* signifies the mortal (non-released souls). That which is the syllable *yam* signifies “with that he controls both”, (released and non-released souls), and because He controls both, therefore, He is called *yam*. He who knows this thus, goes daily to heaven world, in his deep sleep.

Commentary by Śrī Madhvācārya:

If in the condition of *mukti*, the *jīva* becomes a *satya-kāma*, then he is a *satya-kāma* before *mukti* also, for *mukti* is a state in which the *jīva* attains the full stature of his unfoldment. The *mukta* only manifests qualities which were latent in the man and which form his true

nature. Therefore, before *mukti* also the *jīva* ought to manifest the condition of *satya-kāma*.

But he does not do so, what is its reason? To this the Śruti replies *ime satyaḥ kāmāḥ anṛtāpidhānaḥ* – These true desires are covered up by falsehood, namely nescience.

Therefore the Commentator explains this:

Therefore, those who are elect and deserve to get release are *satya-kāmas* even before their release, and their desires are ever fulfilled, even before they get release, but the fulfillment of these desires are not visible on account of ignorance. Therefore all ignorance is called *anṛita* non-righteousness, non-knowledge, for the word “*rita*” means knowledge also, because it is derived from the root “*ri*” to go, to know.

The elect, even before his release, creates thought-forms of all his desires, these forms are not visible to him owing to his want of development. Therefore when he gets release, he is surrounded by the heaven, which he had created by his thoughts and desires, for his desires are never untrue.

Therefore, if he wants to see his desires, the rule is that he cannot see them, so long as he has not attained *mukti*, but when he attains *mukti* and goes to the world of the Lord, he sees all the desires fulfilled. There he sees them all, ready, existing from before, and standing to welcome him.

Now the Commentator explains the verse where it is said that people go in deep sleep to Brahman but do not know him. It is owing to ignorance alone, that in deep sleep people constantly go to the Lord Mādhava, but they do not see him.

These statements by Śrī Madhvācārya explain how the *sādhaka*’s desires for a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in His *līlā* are eventually *fulfilled*, as they were developed and nourished during their *sādhana*. This further confirms that one’s relationship is not inherent in their *svārūpa* or predetermined, and is developed by the *jīva*’s maturing desires and association.

Returning to the *Brahma-sūtras*, these next five *sūtras* provide further conclusive evidence to prove that one’s eternal *līlā* body is not inherent in a seed form in the *jīva*’s *svārūpa*.

Topic 8 – Absence of Body in Liberation

The author now shows the acquisition of a spiritual body (*divya-vigraha*) by the liberated *jīva*.

The doubt is this. Does the liberated *jīva*, with attainment of the highest light (the Lord), have a body (*vigraha*) or not: or by his choice, can he have or not have a body?

Bādari's opinion on the matter is given.

Bādari says the liberated *jīva* has no body, because Śruti states this. BS, 4.4.10

Bādari thinks that the liberated *jīva* has no body. Bodies are produced by *karma*. Since the liberated *jīva* has no *karma*, he cannot have a body. Why? Because *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.1 states this:

When he is in the body the *jīva* cannot rid himself of happiness and distress, and when devoid of a body happiness and distress do not touch him.

Having described suffering because of having a body, the state of not having a body is then described:

Rising from that body, the *jīva* attains the supreme light. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.3)

Smṛti also confirms this: the inhabitants of *Vaikuṇṭha* have no body and senses. (SB 7.1.35)

According to Jaimini, the liberated *jīva* has a body because of statements indicating the *jīva* can choose various bodies. BS, 4.4.11

Jaimini says that the liberated *jīva* has a body Why? Because in the *bhūma vidyā* section of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.26.2) various options for bodies are described for the *jīva*:

He becomes one. Then he becomes two, three, five, seven, nine, and eleven. He becomes one hundred and ten. He becomes one thousand and twenty.

Without having bodies, the *jīva*, which is *aṇu* (indivisible), could not become many forms as stated. One cannot infer that this description is not factual since it is in the section on liberation.

That being the case, when Śruti speaks of the *jīva* being without a body it means that the *jīva* is devoid of a body produced by *karma*. This is proved by Smṛti which will be quoted after the following *sūtra*.

The author gives his view.

Because of his nature as *satya-saṅkalpa*, the *jīva* can have or not have a body just as the twelve day sacrifice can have one sponsor or many. BS, 4.4.12

Because of having the nature of *satya-saṅkalpa* the liberated *jīva* can either have a body or not have a body. This is Bādarāyaṇa's view because both statements are made in the Śruti.

He accepts that the *jīva* in his liberated state can exist with a body or without a body. It is like the twelve day sacrifice. By the desire of the sponsor the sacrifice can be a *satra* with

many sponsors, or it can be *ahīna* with only one sponsor, and there is no contradiction. Similarly the liberated *jīva* can, by his will, have a body or not have a body.

The meaning is this. The liberated *jīvas*, having destroyed all suffering by *brahma-vidyā*, manifest their *satya-saṅkalpa* nature. Those among them who desire a body, by their will, have a body. Thus Śruti says *sa ekadhā*: he manifests one body. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.26.2) Those liberated *jīvas* who do not want a body do not manifest a body. Thus, Śruti says, *aśarīram vāva*: he is without a body. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.1)

For those who desire to serve the Lord eternally with a spiritual body, that body made of the *cit-śakti* manifests. Eternally possessing that body they serve the Lord.

Adding to all the evidence we've already seen, this last statement irrefutably proves one's spiritual body is not inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*. It is given by Kṛṣṇa through the agency of His *svarūpa-śakti*. And it is based on the desires of the *jīva* as cultivated during *sādhana*.

Śruti says:

When all the senses of the liberated *jīva* become filled with the Lord's *śakti*, how does he see and what does he see: he sees the Lord by senses endowed with the Lord's *śakti*. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.15

The person fixed in Brahman, leaving his material body, achieves the Lord and sees by the Lord, hears by the Lord, and experiences everything by the Lord alone. *Madhyandinañana Śruti*

Smṛti says: In that place all men reside with forms like the Lord. SB, 3.15.14

The decision of the *jīva* to have a body or not have a body should be understood to be determined from the time of *sādhana* since it was previously said, *yathā kratu*: as one meditates upon Brahman in this world he attains Brahman after departing from this world. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1) As well, Smṛti as previously quoted says: I move by the feet of Viṣṇu, I see by the eyes of Viṣṇu.

(*Bṛhad-tantra*). Smṛti also confirms this with, *muktasyaitad bhaviṣyati*: such *sādhana* will result in the liberated *jīva* attaining that status.

The facts should be crystal clear to everyone after reading the above commentaries. This is a perfect example of why one must study all references in the full context they are presented. So many inherency proponents use select excerpts from these *sūtras* and commentaries to support their position. But when the complete presentation is examined, it is more than obvious what the facts are, as underlined above for emphasis.

Adding to all of that evidence, there are even more details regarding the liberated *jīva* having a body or not.

The qualities of the liberated *jīva* and the attainment of a spiritual body (*divya-deha*), causes for enjoyment, have been described. The enjoyment is proved by Śruti such as, so 'śnute sarvān kāmān: he enjoys all pleasures.

(*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1) It will be explained in this section that the *jīva* can enjoy either with a body or without a body.

The doubt is this. Can the liberated *jīva* enjoy or not?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) Since he does not have a body or senses, enjoyment is impossible. If he is considered a *yogī*, since he would be full of bliss already, he would not develop desires for enjoyment. Thus enjoyment in liberation is not proper.

Even without a body, the liberated *jīva* can enjoy, since it is reasonable as in the dream state. BS, 4.4.13

Even without a body, he can enjoy, because it is reasonable as in a dream. *Sandhya* means a dream. In a dream, without having a body, one enjoys. Thus even without a body the liberated *jīva* can enjoy.

If the *jīva* has a body, the enjoyment is more.

The liberated *jīva*, if he has a body, enjoys as in the waking state. BS, 4.4.14

With a body the *jīva* can enjoy (more intensely) as in the waking state. The argument that the liberated *jīva* has no desire is not proper because *rasa*, which is to be enjoyed, becomes desired by the *jīva*, since it is the mercy of the Lord.

Though the Lord is satisfied in Himself, He has desires to enjoy because of the desires of the devotee (to give Him enjoyment). However, the liberated *jīva* has desires for enjoying what is given as the mercy of the Lord, because of his *bhakti* to the Lord (accepting it to please the Lord).

Let's review these details. Because of the inherent attribute of *satya-saṅkalpa*, liberated *jīvas* can choose to have a body or not, and that body is made of subtle matter, but it is not produced by *karma*. This is confirmed by Śrī Madhvācārya in his commentary to *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.3.8.

In the previous *sūtra* (BS, 4.1.15) Bādarāyana says that the *muktas* enter a body like a flame entering a wick. As the wick only takes up the oil of the lamp and does not take up the dirt, etc, so that *mukta*, in entering a body, enjoys only the blessings of that body, and does not suffer the miseries of it.

And those *jīvas* who desire to enter an eternal *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa will *attain*, i.e., be *awarded*, a suitable body of *svarūpa-śakti* by the mercy of the Lord. In other words, that eternal body is

not inherent in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* because it is comprised of *svarūpa-śakti*, which is not inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*. It is a gift from Kṛṣṇa via the agency of His *svarūpa-śakti*. And it is based on the desires one cultivated and nourished during one's *sādhana*.

Topic 9 – Knowledge Like a Lamp

The author shows that the liberated *jīva* has all knowledge.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.26.2) it is said: the liberated *jīva* does not see death, sickness or suffering; seeing everything, he sees and obtains everything in all ways.

This states that the liberated *jīva* has knowledge of all things.

The doubt is this. Is this true or not?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It is not true since *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.3.21 states that he does not have all knowledge. *na bahyam kiñcana veda*: he does not know anything externally.

Like a lamp, the *jīva's* knowledge enters many places. That is shown in Śruti. BS, 4.4.15

Just as a lamp enters many places by its rays, so the liberated *jīva* enters many objects (becomes aware of any objects) by its consciousness which spreads out. *prajñā ca tasmāt prasṛtā purāṇī*: because of the Lord, the *jīva's* eternal knowledge spreads out everywhere. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.18)

From the Lord the *jīva's* eternal knowledge spreads.

"It is not correct that the liberated *jīva* has all knowledge because particular knowledge is denied in the Śruti beginning with *prājñenātmanā*."

The text quoted does not forbid particular knowledge of the liberated *jīva*. It refers to other conditions of the *jīva* – deep sleep and dying. These conditions do not refer to the liberated *jīva* because Śruti reveals that the *jīva* is free of sleep and death when liberated. BS, 4.4.16

The text quoted does not forbid particular knowledge of the liberated *jīva*. It refers to other conditions – deep sleep and dying.

The senses merge in the self, and thus they say he sleeps. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.1)

Speech merges into the mind. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.15.1)

Because Śruti reveals that the *jīva* is free of sleep and death when liberated. Thus he has all knowledge.

In the text, the state of unawareness in deep sleep is first described: He does not know himself at that time. He is not aware of "This is I." He is not aware of other beings. He has entered sleep as if he were destroyed. I do not see any enjoyment there.

After this, the liberated *jīva* is described as having omniscience: With spiritual eyes seeing attractive objects in the mind, he enjoys in the spiritual world. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.5)

The non-liberated *jīva*'s lack of awareness due to death is described elsewhere: rising from all elements, he does not see (is not aware of) those elements. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.12) *Vinaśyati* means "he does not see." Thus the liberated *jīva* is omniscient.

It should be understood that the omniscience of the liberated *jīva* is not the same as Kṛṣṇa's omniscience. In other words, the *jīvan-mukta* does not have the capacity to know everything at all times. Neither can the liberated *jīva* create universes by his attribute of *satya-saṅkalpa*.

Topic 10 – Jīva Cannot Create Universes

In *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.1.6 and 8.2.1) it is said: Those who depart from here while knowing *ātmā* and true desirable objects, wander at will in all worlds. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.1.6

If he desires *Pitr-loka*, the Pitṛs come to him. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.2.1

The doubt is this. Can the liberated *jīva* create a universe or not?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) He can, since it was said he is *satya-saṅkalpa* and is very similar to the Lord.

The liberated *jīva* cannot create universes, because of express statements indicating that the Lord only does this, and these statements do not apply to the *jīva*. BS, 4.4.17

Since it was said if he desires *pitr-loka* the Pitṛs come to him, the liberated *jīva* can create some worlds (*pitr-loka*). But excluded is the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, which can be done only by the Lord.

Why? Because there are passages stating that everything comes from Brahman. *Yato vā imāni bhūtāni*: from Him arise all these beings. One cannot take statements concerning the Lord and the *jīva* and mix them. Since the topic in the passage, *yato va imāni bhūtāni* is not concerning the *jīva*, one cannot conclude that the liberated *jīva* can create universes by those two statements quoted above.

If the *jīva* could create universes the author would not have defined Brahman with, *jamādy asya yataḥ*: Brahman is that from which universes are created. If there were many creators (*jīvas* becoming God) it would amount to complete disorder in the universe. Therefore the liberated *jīva* is not the creator of universes.

(Pūrva-pakṣa) “In *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1.5.3 it is said: all the *devatās* offer tribute to that liberated *jīva*. In *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.25.2 it is said: he becomes independent, wandering in all the worlds as he pleases. The liberated *jīva* should have power to create universes since he is worshipped by the *devatās* and it is said that he has great powers.”

If you say there are direct statements in Śruti to show that the liberated *jīva* has the power to create universes, the answer is no, because those statements only indicate that the liberated *jīva* visits the *devatās* by the mercy of the Lord. BS, 4.4.18

If you say that it is not correct to say that the liberated *jīva* cannot create universes because of direct statements in Śruti the answer is no. Why? The text merely says that the liberated *jīva*, by the mercy of the Lord, can go to the [realms] of Brahmā and the *devatās* and enjoy those pleasures.

The *smṛtis* tell us that the Kumāras and Nārada, without obstruction, go to these places and are welcomed by their rulers. The liberated *jīva*, by the Lord's mercy, enjoys those pleasures in the world which is the Lord's effect, and which express the Lord's powers.

Because this is the meaning of those texts, the liberated *jīva* does not create universes.

“If the liberated *jīva* enjoys the pleasures within the material world he is no different from the conditioned souls since these pleasures are temporary.”

The liberated *jīva* is situated in Brahman, is devoid of material changes, because this is stated in Śruti. BS, 4.4.19

The liberated *jīva* is situated in the perfect *svarūpa* of Brahman endowed with its qualities and *dhāma*, etc., in which the material world does not exist. There he experiences Brahman after having destroyed the coverings of ignorance by *vidyā* (*bhakti*) directed towards the Lord. He is in no way contaminated by the world, because *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* speaks of his situation in this way.

Situated in the body with eleven gates belonging to the unborn omniscient Lord, the liberated *jīva* does not lament and is free of illusion. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.1

The meaning of the phrase, *vimuktaḥ ca vimucyate* is "The person, knowing Brahman, freed from things covering Brahman's *svarūpa* (*vimuktaḥ*), becomes free (*vimucyate*) from the things covering Brahman's qualities." Free from the two types of obstruction to experiencing the Lord, he remains directly seeing Brahman, enjoying the imperishable goal. The covering is like a covering produced by clouds, affecting the vision of the *jīva*.

The ignorant *jīvas*, bewildered by *māyā* who is ashamed to stand in sight of the Lord, boast about “I” and “mine.” SB, 2.5.13

The Lord, who is like the sun, is not covered by clouds of *māyā*.

”Since the goal is to realize the *ātmā* whose *svārūpa* is bliss and knowledge, endowed with qualities like *satya-saṅkalpa*, why endeavor for seeing Brahman, the Lord?”

Śruti, Smṛti, and logic as well, show that the liberated *jīva* attains additional bliss by relating with the Lord. BS, 4.4.20

Though the liberated *jīva* is endowed with knowledge and bliss as described above, he does not possess unlimited bliss, since he is very small. He should realize Brahman because he can experience unlimited bliss by that realization. Śruti and Smṛti show this. *rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī-bhavati: attaining the Lord who is rasa, the *jīva* attains full bliss.* (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.6.1) *Ānandī* means full bliss.

I become the ultimate affectionate shelter of the *jīva* who has attained his *svārūpa*, who is beyond death, and possesses unchanging devotion to Me, for I am the shelter of eternal qualities and extraordinary *rasa* for that *jīva*. BG, 14.27

The word *ca* indicates that logic also demonstrates this: taking shelter of a wealthy man, a poor man becomes rich.

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) “According to the statement, *nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyam upaiti*: the *jīva* attains similarity with the Lord (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.3), the liberated *jīva* is equal to the Lord. Then what is the use of the Lord? Being small refers to material intelligence of the *jīva* and does not really mean that the *jīva* is small.”

The *jīva* is not equal to the Lord because there are indications that equality refers only to their enjoyment. BS, 4.4.21

The word *ca* means “only”. The word *na* (not) is understood from *sūtra* 4.4.18. It is said, so '*śnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipaścitā*: the *jīva* enjoys all delights with omniscient Brahman. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.1) The liberated *jīva* is like the Lord only in enjoying.

The statement from *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* does not mean that their *svārūpas* are identical, since there are indications of differences. That the *jīva* is not atomic has been refuted previously (*sūtra* 2.3.19). By the present *sūtra*, the last one defining the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*, which shows that the *jīva* and Brahman are similar only in their enjoyment, the author is thus pointing out their real difference in the capacities of their *svārūpas*.

The following *sūtra* is the last one in the *Brahma-sūtras*. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains that Kṛṣṇa would never let any *jīva* leave Him due to their ever increasing love (*prema*)

Topic 11 – Not Returning to this World

Now the author explains that the liberated *jīva* is at all times close to the Lord. The statements dealing with attaining the [realm] of the Lord are the subject.

The doubt is this. Is liberation, the characteristic of attaining the Lord, temporary or permanent?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It is temporary because one can fall from there as one falls from *svarga*, since it is just another [realm].

There is no return from the Lord's abode, because of scriptural statements. BS, 4.4.22

For the person who has attained the Lord's [realm], by understanding Him through worship, there is no return from there. Why? Because of scriptural statements.

Śruti says:

Those who go by this path do not return to the world of men. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4.15.5

Living his life in this way, he attains the world of Brahman and does not return. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.15.1

Smṛti says:

Attaining Me, those noble-minded souls do not again take material birth, which is filled with suffering and is temporary. They attain Me, the highest goal.

O Arjuna, all those including the inhabitants of Brahma-loka take birth again. But having attained Me, O son of Kuntī, a person does not take birth again. BG 8.15-16

One should never worry that the supreme Lord would desire to make the *jīva* who is dependent on Him fall from His [realm], and that the devotee would ever desire to give up the Lord, since scripture describes their mutual affection for each other.

This emphatic statement by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa proves conclusively that no one ever turns away from Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, nor would Kṛṣṇa let that happen. In other words, no one ever misuses their free will in the spiritual world, and thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements in that regard must be understood to be theoretical, and not literal.

Of these four types, the *jñānī*, who is constantly engaged in thinking of Me, who is practicing pure *bhakti*, is the best. This *jñānī* loves only Me, and I love only him. BG, 7.17

The pure devotee is My very heart: what pains him pains Me. I am the heart of the pure devotee: what pleases him pleases Me. SB 9.4.68

Since pure devotees give up their homes, wives, children, relatives, riches and even their lives simply to serve Me, without any desire for material improvement in this life or in the next, how can I give up such devotees at any time? SB 9.4.65

The person with a pure heart does not give up the root of the feet of Kṛṣṇa. He is like a traveler, who, giving up all sufferings after earning wealth, does not leave his house. SB 2.8.6

The Lord can never let His devotees fall because Smṛti says the devotees have exclusive devotion to Him and the Lord is determined never to give them up, and because the Lord is without faults like cruelty or miserliness, and the devotees are without fault, having devotion exclusively for the Lord.

This is what is said. The supreme Lord, an ocean of affection for those who take shelter of Him, true to His word, and having all His desires accomplished (satya-saṅkalpa), destroying avidyā, the cause of turning away from Him, in His devotees who have given up everything for Him, brings these devotees, His most dear amśas close to Him and never gives them up.

The jīvas, seeking happiness at all costs, though attracted to insignificant material objects for a shadow of pleasure for unlimited births, having understood their source by special good fortune, by the grace of guru, becoming completely purified by service to Him and desiring no one else, having attained their master, the best friend, the most merciful, the form of unlimited bliss and knowledge, never desire to leave Him.

This is what is understood from scriptures (not from logic). Those who are completely surrendered to scripture must have firm faith in this.

The sūtra is repeated to indicate the completion of the work.

Acyuta, who is served by the intelligent, and who, delivering His devotees from the mire of suffering, leads them to His eternal abode of knowledge and bliss, never desires to separate those dear devotees from their deep attachment to Him for even a second.

The absolute nature of the above statements is undeniable and irrefutable proof that no one ever falls from the spiritual world, nor does anyone ever turn away from Kṛṣṇa there. Kṛṣṇa would never allow it because of the powerful nature of the *prema* He exchanges with His devotees.

This concludes the discussion of *mukti* as presented in the *Brahma-sūtras* and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentaries. Next to review are the details about *mukti* from Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prīti Sandarbha*.

Prīti Sandarbha – Mukti

In Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prīti Sandarbha* he discusses the many facets of *mukti* in great detail, including how one's eternal identity and associated *prema* (*prīti*) manifest, all of which is beyond *mukti*.

The book starts with Jīva Gosvāmī's introduction, so first we will read some relevant highlights from the introductory statements, then *Anucchedas* 2-9, and then the five types of *mukti*. The Introduction briefly discusses liberation, both personal and impersonal.

Here the supreme truth enunciated in scripture was previously established in four *Sandarbhās*. Worship of the supreme entity was described in the fifth *Sandarbha*. Now the goal (*prayojana*) is described in appropriate order.

The goal of the human being is to attain happiness and destroy suffering. Complete happiness and destruction of suffering is attained only by *prīti* for the Lord.

That supreme entity which was mentioned was previously described by scriptural citation. It is proven that the supreme entity is eternal, infinite and filled with the highest bliss.

...Though the *jīva* belongs to the Lord, he is controlled by the Lord's *māyā*, since he has no previous knowledge of the Lord. Because of absence of knowledge of his own *svārūpa* as *ātmā* and acceptance of *upādhis* made by *māyā*, the *jīva* is completely covered with the suffering of beginningless *samsāra*. This was described in *Paramātmā Sandarbha*.

Gaining knowledge, consisting of direct contact with the Supreme Lord, a person attains the highest bliss. This is the highest goal of humanity (*parama-puruṣārtha*). Destruction of ignorance concerning one's nature as *ātmā* and absolute destruction of suffering takes place naturally with disappearance of ignorance about the Lord.

...The attainment of the *aṁśī* by the *aṁśa* takes place in two ways. The first is attainment of Brahman after destroying ignorance, which is the function of *māyā*. This manifests exclusively as knowledge derived from the Lord's *svārūpa-śakti*. That attainment can take place in one's own place of practice. Or it can occur gradually after surpassing all the layers of all the [realms], according to a particular type of worship.

The second is attainment of Bhagavān, the Lord. It may be on Earth, with manifestation of some features of the Lord, or it may be in Vaikuṇṭha, with attainment of closeness to His lotus feet by His inconceivable *śakti*, with everything revealed. In these cases, liberation occurs when the *jīva* leaves his body while remaining as a *jīva*.

Liberation is designated as the ultimate goal of humanity because it contains direct realization of the Lord when the *jīva*, free of *upādhis* after giving up his material body, develops, without obstruction, the quality of self-revelation of the Lord, and because by that direct meeting, the *jīva* regards everything else, which is created by *māyā*, to be false.

...This means that liberation, which consists of a direct meeting with the highest entity, is the highest goal. That highest entity is of two types: with non-particularization and with particulars arising from His *svarūpa*. Meeting with the particularized form as Bhagavān or Paramātmā is superior to the non particular form of Brahman.

The next two *Anucchedas* provide further details about *jīvan-muktas*, both those who are impersonalists and those who have attained *bhakti*.

Anuccheda 2 – Liberation Defined

This liberation takes two forms after giving up the body: immediate and gradual (going first to heavenly [realms]). Immediate liberation is described in the Second Canto:

He leads the air to the point between the brows and blocks the seven pathways. Situated there for a moment, unattached, with clear vision, absorbed in the Brahman, he then pierces the *brahma-randhra* and gives up the senses and body. (SB, 2.2.21)

Gradual liberation is described there also, starting with SB, 2.2.22:

O King! If one endeavors for Brahma-loka or the playgrounds of the aerial beings who are endowed with eight mystic powers in the variegated universe, one goes to those places with the mind and senses.

The section ends as follows:

O King! By his realization he attains the blissful, unchanging form of Mahā-viṣṇu. With that termination, he remains blissful. He who has attained this goal does not return to the material world. (SB, 2.2.31)

Liberation even while in this body is described with its details later in the text. The *jīvan-mukta* with direct vision of Brahman is described:

When the gross and subtle material forms, which are impositions on the soul in ignorance, are restrained by the realizations of the devotee, that brings realization of the *jīva's svarūpa*. (SB, 1.3.33)

In that vision the gross and subtle bodies are restrained (but not destroyed) by knowledge of the *jīva's svarūpa*. The gross and subtle bodies cover the *ātmā* with ignorance, though actually they do not exist in the *ātmā*.

Direct vision of Brahman consists of that knowledge of *jīva's svarūpa*. “Seeing Brahma” means direct realization. *Jīva's knowledge of his svarūpa is the cause of this realization. It should be known that the gross and subtle bodies are not destroyed by this realization of the Lord.*

The speciality of the *jīvan-mukta* is directly experiencing Brahman while identifying with it, by realizing the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* which reveals the false relationship with *māyā*'s effects produced by ignorance. Sūta speaks the verse.

Jīvan-muktas, even though still embodied, are not bound by *karma*. They directly experience Brahman because they identify with it due to the realization of their *svarūpa* and its nature as Brahman. It should also be understood that this is not describing merging into the *brahma-jyoti*, rather, it is the spiritual state of consciousness (*brahma-bhūta*) for one who has attained *mukti*.

Now Śrī Jīva presents four verses from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* which describe the characteristics of liberated *jīvas*.

Anuccheda 3 – Impersonal Liberation

The characteristics of this impersonal liberation are described by Kapila in four verses (SB, 3.28.35-38).

When the mind of the foolish *yogī*, still under the shelter of the Lord, becomes devoid of material objects and is detached from all material objects, that mind suddenly gets tamed, just as a flame weakens without oil and wick. The *jīva*, having destroyed misconceptions of his body, then sees Paramātmā without coverings. (SB, 3.28.35)

Ātmānam means Paramātmā.

By final cessation of the mind through *yoga* practice, that *jīva* becomes situated in his true position beyond happiness and distress. Realizing himself as *ātmā*, he sees the cause of his happiness and distress in himself to be the *ahaṅkāra*, caused by ignorance. (SB, 3.28.36)

After attaining steadiness in the power arising from his *svarūpa* it is later said, *upalabdhā-parātmā-kāṣṭha*: he attains realization of *ātmā*. He attains his *svarūpa* as Brahman:

The body along with the senses, controlled by previous impressions, continues to live as long as the *prārabdha-karmas* remain. That person does not again enjoy the body or its extensions such as sons since he has attained *samādhi* and has realized his position as *ātmā*. The body is like a dream body. (SB, 11.13.37)

He does not enjoy because he is not covered by *prārabdha-karmas* at all. It is said, *tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka ekatvam anupaśyata*: for one who sees oneness in all beings and attains Him, what delusion can exist? (*Īśopaniṣad* 7)

This means that, in the end, this person realizes Brahman directly.

When shining *vidyā*, which is a function of *māyā* bestowed by the skillful Lord, weakens, the *jīva* becomes endowed with this treasure. The wise understand that, being situated in this glorious position, this person is worthy of worship. (SB, 1.3.34)

This shining mind, *vidyā*, in the condition of *jīvan-mukta*, bestowed by the skillful supreme lord, is a function of *māyā* in *sattva-guṇa* which arises from the *vidyā* of the *svarūpa-śakti*. When this *vidyā* weakens, then the sages know that the person has achieved the wealth of bliss of Brahman since obstacles have been removed. Because of that attainment, he is worshipped for his attainment of his *svarūpa*. An outstanding revelation has taken place. Sūta speaks the verse.

Although *jīvan-muktas* still undergo their remaining *prārabdha-karmas*, they are not covered or affected by them, nor are they bound by them like *jīvas* who are still covered by *avidyā*. Also take note that the discussion of the *jīva* attaining his *svarūpa* did not include realizing a specific relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās*. It is simply realization of one's spiritual nature as part of Brahman.

Anuccheda 4 is very long and it deals with the *jīva's* relationship with Paramātmā, which we have covered extensively in the previous references from *Paramātmā Sandarbha*. *Anuccheda* 5 is short but similar in content. Neither are directly relevant to our examination of *mukti*.

The next three *Anucchedas* (6-8) discuss meeting Kṛṣṇa directly, both internally and externally, and while still living – not after death. Experiences of meeting Kṛṣṇa are not all due to *mukti*, and they are thus on different levels. There are many interesting facets to this particular subtopic.

***Anuccheda* 6 – Meeting the Lord, Internally and Externally**

Direct meeting with the Lord is of two types: internal and external.

When I sing His glories, the Lord, who makes any place that He touches holy, and who is attracted to those who sing His glories, quickly appears in my heart, as if being called. (SB, 1.6.33)

The sages saw the Lord surrounded by devotees carrying objects to offer Him. He was previously the object of their meditation, but now appeared directly before their eyes. (SB, 3.15.38)

The qualification for internal vision of the Lord is stated in *Rudra-gītā*:

The devotee whose heart is pure, not agitated by external objects, and not subject to falling asleep during worship, having been blessed by *bhakti-devī* herself, certainly sees the Lord's pastimes and beauty with ease. (SB, 4.24.59)

The sage among the devotees who was previously described, whose pure heart, blessed with *bhakti-yoga*, does not wander to material objects and does not enter into the hole of ignorance, easily sees the Lord (internally).

The Lord explains to Nārada by negation about the qualification for seeing the Lord externally:

Oh! In this body you will not be able to see Me again. But lax practitioners who still have some contamination cannot see Me at all. (SB, 1.6.21)

A pure heart is not the only qualification. What is it? The main qualification is a manifestation of the Lord's self revealing śakti filled with the Lord's desire, appearing by special bhakti. By that manifestation everything is revealed.

Thus the internal appearance of the Lord is described in the following:

Ignorance is cut and all doubts are destroyed. On seeing the Lord in the mind, all *karmas* are destroyed. (SB, 1.2.21)

External appearance of the Lord is explained by Citraketu to Saṅkarṣaṇa:

O Lord! Nothing is impossible for You. Just from seeing You, all my sins have been destroyed. By hearing one of Your names once, even the outcaste is delivered from the material world. (SB, 6.16.44)

O Lord, You are the supreme soul, and we are Your servants. How shall we serve You? My Lord, simply seeing You puts an end to all the troubles of human life. (SB, 10.86.49)

By that revelation, the heart achieves complete purity, and the senses of the person then identify themselves with that manifestation, by attaining oneness with the Lord's self-revealing śakti. This depends on special *bhakti*:

The seriously inquisitive student or sage, well equipped with knowledge and detachment, realizes that Absolute Truth by rendering devotional service after hearing from *guru*. (SB, 1.2.12)

An example of the *śakti* being filled with the Lord's desire is seen in the non-distinction of Brahman and Bhagavān. Matsya speaks to Satyavrata:

By My mercy, you will realize My power known as the impersonal Brahman, which will be disclosed in your heart through questions and answers. (SB, 8.24.38)

The Lord speaks to Brahmā: Seeing My [realm] reveals all knowledge. (SB, 2.9.22)

The Lord who is eternally invisible is seen by His own *śakti*. Without that, who can see the unlimited lotus-eyed Lord? (*Nārāyaṇādhyātma*)

Śruti says: The Lord reveals His form to whom He chooses. (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.23)

Purity of the senses is necessary in order to reflect the Lord's śakti. Even after seeing the Lord by *bhakti*, the Lord speaks of the necessity of being free of sins such as killing animals to Mucukunda.

But He says this to cause fear in order to increase longing arising from the fear of quickly losing sight of the Lord. Showing hell to great devotees like Yudhiṣṭhira is simply an illusion (since he is already pure) since it took place on a mountain on the path to *svarga* (not hell).

...If it is said that persons with impure hearts see the Lord, that is merely a shadow form of the Lord. *Gītā* says: I am not revealed to all people but am covered by *yoga māyā*. (BG, 7.25)

The Lord is seen by *yogīs* through *bhakti*. He cannot be seen without *bhakti*. The Lord cannot be seen by anger or envy. (*Padma Purāṇa* 6.238.83)

When the Lord does not come as an *avatāra* He cannot be seen. Even though He pervades everywhere He cannot be seen. But when He comes as an *avatāra*, though He is full of bliss, He gives sorrow to the materialists. Though He is attractive, He instills terror. Though He is the friend of all, He does not act as a friend to them. Thus seeing Him has opposite results.

The main cause of His being invisible and manifesting *yoga-māyā* is the impurity of people's hearts due to their offending the devotees. Though the Lord is visible everywhere at this time, He is covered from their view. When there is a shadow of seeing Him in this way, it is not defined as liberation. The definition, *muktir hitvānyathā rūpam* does not apply to this case.

Though it is said in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (4.15.8) that Śiṣupāla saw Kṛṣṇa, seeing Kṛṣṇa purely however, only took place when Śiṣupāla was dying:

He saw the Lord who had removed his fault of hatred, who was Brahman itself, a form of indestructible light, a fire with many rays holding a *cakra* ready to kill him. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 4.15.9)

Those among men who have pure hearts, and those who have contamination other than the offense to devotees, have all sufferings destroyed when they meet the Lord. Others (offenders) have their sufferings destroyed to the extent that offense has been destroyed.

...*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* agrees with this.

Persons with impure hearts are of two types: those who are apathetic to the Lord (*bahirmukha*) and those who hate the Lord. The apathetic are of two types: though seeing the Lord, some are absorbed in material enjoyment; and others though seeing the Lord, show disrespect.

An example of the first type is the *devatās* and ordinary people who were absorbed in enjoyment when the Lord appears in the world. An example of the second type is Indra who spoke with contempt. *Kṛṣṇam martyam upāśritya*: Kṛṣṇa has a material body. (SB, 10.25.3)

The Śrutis say:

Having turned their minds toward You, the ever-blissful soul of all existence, they no longer dedicate themselves to serving family life at home, which simply robs a man of his good qualities. (SB, 10.87.35)

The Lord says to Indra:

A man blinded by intoxication with his power and opulence cannot see Me nearby with the rod of punishment in My hand. If I desire his real welfare, I destroy his material fortune. (SB, 10.27.16)

...Devotees who can be understood to have met the Lord by certain indications have only an imitation of impure minds. Those who do not actually meet the Lord and are understood to be absorbed in material life may have a false meeting with the Lord. Thus the materialists who see the Lord with impure hearts do not actually see the Lord.

Those who hate the Lord are of two types. Some recognize the Lord's beauty and other qualities and still hate Him, having no attraction to Him, because they cannot accept His sweetness. Kālayavana is an example. Others perceive Him in a distorted way and then hate Him. Kamsa's wrestlers are an example.

...It is proper to say that these types do not realize the Lord. Lacking *jñāna*, *bhakti*, and pure *prīti*, it is impossible for them to accept things which are by nature most sweet, most powerful and full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Though they do not accept the Lord in the beginning, at another time they can be delivered, just as continual eating of sugar candy brings about a cure. Thus *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says that Śiśupāla finally saw the Lord, when his faults of hatred had been dissipated.

Thus, only those with pure hearts see the Lord. That is the definition of liberation.

Surprisingly, seeing Kṛṣṇa does not always indicate or even guarantee liberation. Even though many people see Kṛṣṇa when He appears as an *avatara*, everyone sees Him according to their material and spiritual status. Those who hate Kṛṣṇa may see Him but they don't actually see Kṛṣṇa as He truly is. That pure revelation and vision is hidden from them for obvious reasons.

Liberation for personalists means seeing Kṛṣṇa directly, either internally or externally, and according to the quality and intensity of their *bhakti* and *prīti*. In this context, seeing Kṛṣṇa means while one is still living – not after death. For devotees, seeing Kṛṣṇa externally is most desirable.

Anuccheda 7 – Externally Meeting the Lord Is Superior to Internal Vision

Such *devatās* as Lord Brahmā achieved success by seeing Your lotus feet in their minds by mature *yoga* practice. And now, my Lord, You have appeared before my eyes. (SB, 12.9.5)

Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary says “Brahmā and others having attained sight of Your lotus feet in their minds are inferior. You have appeared to my eyes. This is a greater blessing.”

One should also see the following:

Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, whose foot dust cannot be seen by *yogīs* in *samādhi* though they have controlled their mind by severe hardship for many births, is eternally situated here, directly visible to the eyes of the people of Vraja. Ah! How can the good fortune of the people of Vraja be described? (SB, 10.12.12)

Nārada says this:

When I sing His glories, the Lord, who makes any place that He touches holy, and who is attracted to those who sing His glories, quickly appears in my heart, as if being called. (SB, 1.6.33)

He also attained direct meeting:

O best of the Kurus! Eager to engage in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni stayed constantly in *Dvārakā*, which was always protected by the arms of Govinda. (SB, 11.2.1)

Mārkaṇḍeya speaks to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

Anuccheda 8 – The State of Liberation While Alive After Meeting the Lord Is Described

One who does not desire anything within this world, who has controlled his senses, who has fixed his intelligence on Me, who regards heaven and hell equally, and whose mind is completely satisfied in Me, finds only happiness wherever he goes. (SB, 11.14.13)

Akiñcana means one who finds nothing of value except the Lord, because his mind is satisfied in the Lord. As a result, three qualities are mentioned, *dānta*, *śānta*, and *sama-cetasah*. Because he sees everything as disgusting he is *sama-cetasah* (equipoised). Because he sees that Lord everywhere, he finds joy in all directions. The Lord speaks the verse.

As we will learn further on in the sections discussing *rāgānuga-bhakti* and its related aspects, the goal (*prayojana*) of *prema-bhakti* must be attained “before” one dies, just like liberation means seeing Kṛṣṇa while still alive. This guarantees that one will take birth in *bhauma-līlā*, which is the prerequisite to entering the *nitya-līlā* in the spiritual world, i.e., “going back to Godhead.”

The Five Types of Mukti

In this section Jīva Gosvāmī explains the five types of *mukti*, four of which are associated with devotees practicing different types of *bhakti* to attain the Lord. These details are covered in *Anucchedas* 9-14. *Anuccheda* 15 deals with liberation and *prīti*.

Anuccheda 9 – Attaining the Lord on leaving the Body

...This is the state of leaving the body.

There are five types of liberation: *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya*, and *sāyujya*.

Sālokya means living in the same [realm] as the Lord – Vaikuṇṭha.

Sārṣṭi means having powers similar to the Lord.

Sārūpya means attaining a form similar to the Lord.

Sāmīpya means becoming qualified to approach the Lord closely.

Sāyujya means, for some persons, to enter into the body of the Lord.

These are equated with liberation with a predominance of one of them. Generally, in *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, and *sārūpya* one has only mental meeting with the Lord. *Sāmīpya* gives external meeting.

Sāyujya is different. The manifestation of the Lord's form in the other types of liberation is thus quite different from merging in Brahman (*sāyujya*), which is characterized by not having a definite manifestation of the Lord's form. This is like a state of deep sleep.

...These five types of liberation are beyond the *guṇas*. In the section on *bhūma-vidyā* which is beyond the *guṇas*, it is said that the liberated person, by his will, can manifest different forms. *Sa ekadhā bhavati tirdhā bhavati*: he becomes one, he becomes three. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.26.2) It is also stated that Vaikuṇṭha is beyond the *guṇas*.

In Vaikuṇṭha there are no *rajas* and *tamas*, and no *sattva* mixed with *rajas* and *tamas*. There is no influence of time. There is no influence of *māyā* at all, what to speak of its products such as material elements. In Vaikuṇṭha the inhabitants are fully dedicated to the Lord and are worshipable by the *devas*, *asuras* and devotees. (SB, 2.9.10)

...These types of liberation are permanent.

My devotees, who are always satisfied to be engaged in My service, are not interested even in the four principles of liberation [*sālokya*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* and *sārṣṭi*], although these are automatically achieved by their service. What then is to be said of any perishable happiness? (SB, 9.4.67)

Other places and things are accepted as perishable. When sometimes it is said someone returns to the material world it is to be considered an occasional event for variety in the

Lord's pastimes in which that person enters the Lord's abode within the material world. Later that person continues his eternal residence with the Lord.

This confirms that *sāyujya* is eternal, and thus, there is no falling from the *brahma-jyoti*. This *Anuccheda* also includes a number of references from the *Brahma-sūtras*, *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and several *Purāṇas*, all stating that there is no fall from the spiritual world having attained any type of *mukti*. There is no need to reiterate those numerous proofs here, as that conclusion has been irrefutably established. Suffice it to say they are part of the text.

Continuing, we will now examine more unambiguous statements proving conclusively that the *jīva*'s spiritual body is awarded by the *svarūpa-śakti* and is not inherent in their *svarūpa*. Neither is it dormant or in seed form. This is further confirmation of the evidence we saw in the *Brahma-sūtras* regarding whether or not the liberated *jīva* has a body.

Sārūpya

It is said that in the state of liberation after giving up the body, these persons attain equality with the Lord:

In that place all men reside with forms like the Lord and they worship the Lord with unmotivated service. (SB, 3.15.14)

There the people worship the Lord without desiring results, according to the words of the Lord. Unlimited forms (*mūrtayah*), portions of light of the Lord, forms of the splendor of *vaikuṇṭha-loka*, reside there. The Lord using one among these forms (associates) makes the form of a liberated soul. It is stated here that the forms of the inhabitants are like the form of the Lord. (This is *sārūpya*.) *Brahmā* speaks to the *devatās*.

This section on *sārūpya* is often used as evidence to prove that our spiritual body is eternal and it awaits us in the spiritual world. However, this section is dealing with liberation in *Vaikuṇṭha* – not *vraja-līlā* – which is a completely different arrangement as we have seen. The forms referred to here are *Vaikuṇṭha* forms with four arms like Lord *Viṣṇu*, since that is the desire of those seeking *sārūpya-mukti*, and that is the very definition of *sārūpya-mukti*.

This begs the question: if one's spiritual body and *rasa* with *Kṛṣṇa* are inherent in their *svarūpa* then *sārūpya* as described above makes no sense, since it is something attained based on one's desires cultivated during *sādhana*. Nowhere has *Jīva Gosvāmī* stated that these four types of *mukti* are inherent in the *svarūpa* of some *jīvas*. They are all goals one must specifically aspire to attain.

One member of ISKCON's Śāstric Advisory Committee recently wrote an article attempting to prove that *prema* is inherent in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*. His bizarre argument was that *prema* is inherent in the *Vaikuṇṭha* forms mentioned in this *Anuccheda*, and when a *jīva* is given one of these forms, they also get the *prema* that is inherent in these forms! This is another perfect example of ridiculous unnecessary speculation due to not properly studying the knowledge

given by the previous *ācāryas*, as well as a serious lack of *adhikāra*. There is no need for such convoluted speculation to understand these *ācārya*'s presentations.

Devotees who aspire to enter *vraja-līlā*, focus on their *siddha-deha* – their desired spiritual identity and body, which are core aspects of their desired relationship with Kṛṣṇa. That body is then *awarded* by Kṛṣṇa according to one's desires developed during *sādhana*. It is not pre-existing or inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*.

Anuccheda 10

Having been awarded a transcendental body befitting an associate of the Lord, the body made of five material elements, with *karmas* relating to the present body, fell away. (SB, 1.6.28)

I was supplied with a body by the Lord who had promised to give such a body. That body was pure, devoid of material contamination and an *aṁśa* of the light, which is an *aṁśa* of the Lord with *karmas* of this life destroyed, the material body of five elements fell away. It is understood the material subtle body also was destroyed.

For a person who is fixed in the Lord, the material body remains as long as the *prārabdha-karmas* are present. Thus the commentary says, “From this it is understood that the bodies of the Lord's associates are without *karma*, pure and eternal.” Nārada speaks to Vyāsa.

Anuccheda 11

This form is indicated in the following:

Persons desiring *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* worship the Lord and attain the treasure of *prema* as well as material benedictions. They also receive a spiritual body. May that Lord of unlimited mercy free me from *saṁsāra* and bestow such a spiritual body. (SB, 8.3.19)

The commentary says, “This person receives a body which is unchanging.” Gajendra speaks.

Anuccheda 12

The Śruti of the *Tāṇḍis* says:

He is like a horse, shaking off all sin. The realized person attains the spiritual world with a spiritual body. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.13.1)

Sometimes the material body itself becomes a spiritual body by the inconceivable śakti of the Lord as in the case of Dhruva (SB 4.12.29). The commentary says, “He had a glowing body.”

There is no way to interpret or spin these statements to conclude anything other than their direct intended meaning. The spiritual body of the liberated jīva is not inherent or dormant in seed form in their svarūpa. It is *given*, or *awarded* to them through the agency of Kṛṣṇa’s svarūpa-śakti, according to their desires as expressed during their sādhana and worship leading up to the attainment of their desired goals.

Now the other types of *mukti* are discussed.

Sarṣṭi was illustrated in *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

When a person who gives up all *karmas* offers himself entirely to *guru* and eagerly desires to render service to Me alone, he achieves freedom from death and, more important, is qualified to be an associate of mine in *prema*. (SB, 11.29.34)

Śruti says:

In the spiritual world he walks, eats, plays and enjoys. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.12.3)

He attains a kingdom and all *devatās* offer him gifts. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 1.6.2)

He wanders freely in all the worlds. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.25.2)

...However the liberated jīva cannot create, maintain and destroy universes, what to speak of creating the powers of *Vaikuṇṭhas*. *Jagad-vyāpāra-varjam*: the liberated jīva cannot create universes. (*Brahma-sūtra*, 4.4.17)

Attaining great qualities in *sārṣṭi*:

Since I found no one else as highly elevated as you in character and great qualities, I became your son and was known as *Prṣnigarbha*. (SB, 10.3.41)

Thus jīvas attain general powers. It is understood that they attain *siddhis* like *aṇima* partially only. The powers granted by the Lord are eternal.

Behold the objects of enjoyment, not subject to fear and lamentation, given by the Lord, attained rightfully by your service to Me, which have been attained through concentration of advanced meditation and worship. I will give you the vision.

What is the use of attaining other enjoyments, which are destroyed by the movement of the Lord’s brow? You have become successful. Enjoy these extraordinary objects, attained by your service to Me – unattainable by men who identify themselves as kings. (SB, 3.23.7-8)

These powers were attained by complete concentration on austerity, trance and worship. What use are other things not related to the Lord? They are of no use. They are destroyed if the Lord moves His eyebrow. Kardama speaks to Devahūti.

More about *sārūpya*.

Anuccheda 13

Sārūpya should be understood in the same way (a form similar to the Lord but not exactly the same).

Because Gajendra had been touched directly by the Supreme Lord, he was freed from the bondage of ignorance and received the same bodily features as the Lord, with yellow garments and four hands. (SB, 8.4.6)

The meaning is clear. Śukadeva speaks the verse.

Anuccheda 14 – Sāmīpya

Sāmīpya is described in *Bhāgavata Sandarbha* using the description of the departure of Kardama starting with SB, 3.24.43 and ending with SB, 3.24.55.

By pure *bhakti* for the Lord, Kardama attained the position of an associate of the Lord in the spiritual world. (SB, 3.24.47)

Next is the section where Śrī Jīva discusses *sāyujya*. As I mentioned, because of certain statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda, many devotees believe *sāyujya* is not a fully liberated condition, which means that one can fall back into material existence from that position. This is not supported by Jīva Gosvāmī. We have examined and reconciled those statements in the previous section, *Misconceptions About Liberation*.

Sāyujya

Sāyujya is understood for *sādhakas* by the examples of Aghāsura and others. Clear examples are not given in *Bhāgavatam* since this is not approved for devotees like *sālokyā* and others types of liberation. The primary element in *sāyujya* is the experience of being submerged in bliss which is a quality of the Lord.

Some authorities say that sometimes because of the Lord's desire, by the Lord's mercy, by obtaining a particle of the Lord's *śakti*, a person can externally experience a left-over non-material particle of enjoyment given by the Lord, as is suitable to the person. That person does not experience everything about the Lord since that person has not achieved the Lord completely. Thus that person who merges cannot create or destroy universes, as stated previously.

Śruti says:

When a person is liberated and enters the Lord he experiences bliss and has all desires fulfilled. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*)

Attaining Brahman, he sees by Brahman and hears by Brahman. (*Madhya-dināyana-śruti*)

He grasps with the hand of the Lord. (*Bṛhad-tantra, Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa*)

The last two quotations show that a person in *sāyujya* sometimes attains a particle of the Lord's *śakti*.

Sometimes by the will of the Lord for pastimes, the Lord desires His devotees to appear in the material world and then join Him as associates. For instance, Śiṣupāla and Dantavakra attained *sāyujya* and then returned to their positions as associates.

This is indicated by Nārada:

These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu – Jaya and Vijaya – by meditation with intense, continuous hatred of the Lord, entered Kṛṣṇa, and then went to the side of the Lord as His two associates in Vaikuṇṭha. (SB, 7.1.47)

It is concluded that they attained more than merging in Brahman according to ancient texts because they attained a meeting with the Lord in the form of attaining Him continually with *sālokyā* and other types of liberation.

Thus, sometimes persons attain the Lord after attaining Brahman, just like some people attain liberation after going to higher [realms] (*krama-mukti*). Ajāmila attained perfection in this way (after Brahman):

Sitting in a temple of Viṣṇu, he practiced *bhakti-yoga*, and, controlling all his senses, concentrated his mind on the Lord.

Detaching his mind from the sense objects, with full concentration, he absorbed his mind in the Brahman, a form of the Lord and the object of realization.

When his intelligence then became fixed on the form of the Lord, he saw the persons before him whom he had previously seen. Seeing them, he bowed his head.

After seeing those forms, he gave up his body at this holy place on the Gaṅgā River and immediately attained a spiritual body as an associate of the Lord.

Accompanied by the order carriers of Lord Viṣṇu, Ajāmila boarded an airplane made of gold. Passing through the airways, he went directly to the abode of Lord Viṣṇu, the husband of the goddess of fortune. (SB, 6.2.40-44)

The meaning is clear. The superiority of attaining the Lord is immediately understood. Śukadeva speaks.

In conjunction with *sāyujya-mukti*, here is a reference from *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* where Sanātana Gosvāmī describes the happiness of *samādhi* while being absorbed in the *brahma-jyoti* as plain, monotonous, undeveloped, and so vague as to be virtually nonexistent. He then compares that to the experiences of a devotee who has attained *prema-bhakti*.

The happiness felt in impersonal *samādhi* is plain, isolated, vague, and limited because in that *samādhi* the functions of the mind have ceased. But when the object of meditation appears in the active mind, that object is more vividly manifest, like sunlight reflected on a crystal mountain. BB, 2.2.215

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

While the impersonalists are in meditative trance, their egos and their external senses no longer act. Since the personality then ceases to function, real perception can no longer take place. The supposed happiness of impersonal *samādhi* is therefore devoid of content.

We are told that in *samādhi* the mind stops functioning, which implies that all the external and internal senses stop also, because all the senses depend on the mind. Thus if in impersonal *samādhi* any happiness is tasted, that happiness must be monotonous and undeveloped, and so vague as to be virtually nonexistent.

Considering this, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the personified Vedas praise the Supreme Person as the original Brahman in this way:

You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, see no one as an intimate friend and no one as a stranger, just as the ethereal sky has no connection with perceptible qualities. In this sense You resemble a void. SB, 10.87.29

Impersonalists may respond to this by saying that in *samādhi* the experience of Brahman is hardly void, because Brahman is self-manifest as the fountainhead of all existence, always and everywhere. Although this defense may be true, in *samādhi* the meditator's senses no longer function, so what he goes through is as good as nothing.

And although the impersonal Brahman is present always and everywhere, for all practical purposes it is nothing because the living beings are unable to perceive it; otherwise, since Brahman is present always and everywhere, why hasn't everyone perceived it and become liberated?

...In impersonal *samādhi* one is unable to free oneself from the illusion of material existence because while absorbed in that *samādhi* one has no power to act. But serving the Supreme Lord through methods like the devotional meditation of chanting His names is performed with the voice and other active senses.

Śrīla Prabhupāda stated numerous times that impersonalists can fall from the *brahma-jyoti*, but with the evidence just presented, clearly that does not mean they fall from the status of *sāyujya-mukti*, which Jīva Gosvāmī confirmed is eternal. This is a very important point to grasp for the proper understanding. Let's review the details.

Sanātana Gosvāmī described the *samādhi* of the liberated impersonalist, i.e., they are merged in Brahman during their *samādhi*, but because they are still *jīvan-muktas* they are not situated permanently in *sāyujya-mukti* yet, since they still have material bodies, i.e., their manifest *prārabdha-karma*. Sanātana Gosvāmī also made it clear that there is no thinking, feeling or willing while merged in Brahman during *samādhi* since the mind and senses are not functioning.

Thus, as we read in the section *Misconceptions About Liberation*, *jīvan-muktas* can fall from that liberated status if they commit *aparādha* to Kṛṣṇa or His devotees. This is the fall down Śrīla Prabhupāda was referring to in his statements. It does not mean they fell directly from the *brahma-jyoti* or from *sāyujya-mukti*.

The commentary continues with Sanātana Gosvāmī comparing the differences in the devotee's experiences.

In that superior devotional *samādhi* the inner and outer senses enjoy varieties of reciprocation with the Supreme Lord that constantly increase, with wonderful ecstasies arising one after another. Thus the same object of meditation that is unclear to the consciousness of the impersonalist is vividly clear to the meditating devotee.

Here the *bhakti-śāstras* introduce an analogy: When the light of the sun and other luminaries shines on a mountain of crystal glass, the reflected radiance is more brilliant than the light in the sky itself. Similarly, when the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord appear in the meditation of a reflective devotee, the ever-fresh varieties the devotee experiences at every moment, through all his internal and external senses, provides infinitely more pleasure than the void of impersonal *samādhi*.

When a Vaiṣṇava has attained pure love of God, we may observe that his entire body may sometimes cease to function, or some of the limbs or one or more of the senses may stop working. His senses may seem unable to make contact with their objects. We should then understand that the functions of his senses have merged into his inner consciousness.

Or his external senses may have merged into their inner counterparts, or into the mind, or else into the intelligence or ego. Or the functions of some of his external senses may have merged into one another; that is, his hearing, sight, taste, speech, and touch may have merged into one, two, three, or more of his external senses or may have crossed over from one sense to another.

In this intricate situation the functions of his senses may seem intermixed. This is possible because internally the living being has a spiritual mind and a full set of senses,

which underlie the material mind. From within the material mind these spiritual faculties, when awakened, can subtly perform all the functions of the external senses.

These are some of the astonishing external symptoms of *prema-bhakti* which can only be comprehended by direct experience.

This concludes the section on *mukti*. As we have learned, *mukti* has many levels and facets, and it is much more than merging into Kṛṣṇa's *brahma-jyoti*. Now we will learn more details about *prīti*, which is beyond *mukti*.

Prīti – Beyond Mukti

Defining Prīti

Many devotees may not be familiar with the term *prīti* or its nuanced meanings. Jīva Gosvāmī dedicated the last of the six *Sandarbhās* to the topic of *prīti* so its significance cannot be overstated. This section includes select *Anucchedas* from *Prīti Sandarbha* that I've chosen because they fit the focus and purposes of this treatise.

In *Prīti Sandarbha* Śrī Jīva analyzes the elements of *rasa* in great detail, including the primary and secondary *rasas*, similar to what Rūpa Gosvāmī presented in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. I presented some of those details in my first book so I won't repeat them here. Other topics discussed in *Prīti Sandarbha* are also beyond the scope of this treatise.

First, here is another excerpt from Śrī Jīva's Introduction to *Prīti Sandarbha*, where he summarizes the key aspects of *prīti* to highlight its significance related to attaining a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa. These are very powerful statements that should be contemplated and assimilated.

Therefore, realization of Bhagavān in various conditions such as Paramātmā is supreme.

1. Though this is so, and realizing other qualities of His *svarūpa* are also supreme, realizing the particular qualities of dearness, called *prīti* or *bhakti*, is considered topmost, since the Lord by nature is the abode of unconditional *prīti*.
2. That *prīti* destroys suffering completely.
3. Without that *prīti* one cannot realize all His other qualities or His *svarūpa*.
4. On attaining *prīti* the Lord must appear.
5. To the degree that one realizes the Lord's *prīti*, one realizes the Lord.
6. By manifestation and perfection of *prīti*, one attains full realization of the Lord.

The highest happiness is the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān with all His qualities. That happiness is the abode of unconditional *prīti*. Thus, in realizing the Lord, the chief component is His *prīti* alone. Man must seek this out at all times. It is thus established that *prīti* is the supreme goal of humanity.

Continuing on from *Anuccheda* 14 in the previous Section, Śrī Jīva now proves that *prīti* is superior to liberation. Here are the highlights.

***Anuccheda* 15 – Prīti and Liberation**

Sāmīpya is greater than *sālokya* and the others. It is greater since it requires an external appearance of the Lord. This has been shown. In this way liberation has been shown.

In *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* Vajra asks:

If the number of *jīvas* is constant in all *kalpas*, liberation would not be suitable for them. O knower of *dharma*! I ask the cause. If *kalpa* after *kalpa* the *jīvas* are one by one liberated, the universe would become empty, since there is no beginning to time.

Mārkaṇḍeya answers:

When a *jīva* is liberated, the Lord, possessing inconceivable *śakti*, fills the universe by releasing another *jīva*. Those who go to *Brahma-loka* are liberated with *Brahmā*. Others are “created” in the next life of *Brahmā*. (*Viṣṇu Dharmottara* 1.81.11-14)

Sometimes some *jīvas* in a *kalpa* are in a deep sleep state since their *karmas* have not been awakened. “Creation” refers to entering a universe through creation of *upādhis* for the infinite number of *jīvas* who have entered infinite universes, though they were merged in *prakṛti*. If there was a first creation, there would be the fault of getting reactions for acts not committed.

This last statement provides additional conclusive evidence that there was no “first creation” of the material worlds, and thus, no possibility of a “first choice” for the *nitya-baddha jīvas*, nor a “first birth” in the material world. *Anādi* means without beginning. Thus, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's statements in *Jaiva-dharma* about *jīvas* making a “first choice” must be understood as another adjustment for audience, time and circumstances.

The commentary continues...

Prīti for the Lord is described as greater than these types of liberation. Even if these liberations cannot exist without *prīti*, some persons have the goal of these liberations with destruction of personal suffering, and not the goal of the Lord. Such persons are inferior. Thus it is said *kaivalyaika-prayojanam*: the goal of *Bhāgavatam* is the Lord. (SB, 12.13.12) The meaning concludes in Bhagavān.

...From beginning to end, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is full of the nectar of Lord's pastimes which give bliss to devotees endowed with a sense of renunciation. (SB, 12.13.11)

The work's sweet narration of pastimes of the Lord gives bliss to the devotees who are *ātmārāma*. *Sat* refers to *ātmārāmas* as in *itthaṁ satāṁ brahma-sukhānubhūtyā*: He was realized as Brahman for those who were *jñānīs*. (SB, 10.12.11)

Though I [Śukadeva Gosvāmī] was fixed in Brahman and beyond the *guṇas*, my mind became attracted to the pastimes of the Lord. I thus learned about His pastimes. (SB, 2.1.9)

Thus, *kaivalya* should be explained in terms of these verses. If the word *kaivalya* is explained as “pure” then this indicates *prīti*, which is the purest. The meaning is *prīti* alone. Previously the word *śuddha* was explained in *Bhakti Sandarbha* to mean pure *bhakti*.

This was stated in explaining the faults of other things. *Dharmah projjhita-kaitavo'tra paramah* (SB, 1.1.2) The commentary says, “The prefix *pra* indicates rejection of even the desire for liberation.” In *Bhāgavatam*, which presents *bhāgavata-dharma*, the desire for liberation is considered cheating. If the word *kaivalya* is taken to mean Bhagavān, or His nature, then His nature is *prīti* alone.

...Thus *prīti* is the conclusion, since everything ends in its cultivation. One other explanation is that *prīti* to the Lord, which is superior to the *kaivalya* of liberation, is the goal. Actually, however, the word *kaivalya* is mainly used to indicate pure *bhakti*, as was discussed before.

...The performance of duties offered to the Lord gradually becomes liberation. The next verse defines liberation or *apavarga*. It is pure *bhakti* to the Lord, free of material attraction. He performs actions for the happiness of devotees, not for His own happiness. By His nature He is beyond the *guṇas* and words. He is without disappearance, always being manifest.

The *svarūpa* of *bhakti* is that it is devoid of *upādhis* like liberation. The reason for the word *apavarga* is described. It takes place by destruction of the knot of ignorance, the cause of various material goals. The derivation of *apavarga* is “that method by which one quits the material world.” *Viṣṇor anucaratvaṁ hi mokṣam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ*: the wise say that liberation is serving Viṣṇu. (*Padma Purāṇa*)

Although the term *upādhi* has been used to indicate the material coverings of the *jīva*, here Śrī Jīva uses it in relation to liberation. Liberation is realization of the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*, which is a most exalted position in the material world, yet, from the perspective of devotees, it is an undesirable *upādhi* if it doesn't include *bhakti* and *prīti* for Kṛṣṇa.

Anuccheda 16

In the list of ten topics of a *Mahāpurāṇa*, the word *mukti* (liberation) means the same. The chief meaning of the word *poṣaṇa* is this also. *Poṣaṇa* means mercy. The highest point of mercy is the Lord giving *prema*. *Muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam*: the Lord gives liberation but rarely *bhakti*. (SB, 5.6.18)

...The quality of *bhakti* is *prīti*.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, (1.2.309) Rūpa Gosvāmī states, “Therefore, some call the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, *puṣṭi mārga* (the path of mercy).” And above, Śrī Jīva says, “The highest point of mercy is the Lord giving *prema*.” *Mukti* and *prema* are gifts bestowed by Kṛṣṇa in accordance with the desires and endeavors of each individual practitioner.

The next *Anuccheda* explains the power of hearing *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* to invoke *prīti*.

Anuccheda 17

Prīti was defined in *Tattva Sandarbha* in summary as the highest human goal, as a result of hearing the scripture *Bhāgavatam*. This was also defined by Vyāsa in *samādhi* and by Śukadeva in his heart.

By hearing *Bhāgavatam*, *bhakti* (*prīti*) for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa appears. Hearing it also destroys lamentation, illusion, and fear in the human being. (SB, 1.7.7)

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the son of Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who destroys all sin, and who, though fixed in his own bliss with no distractions, became attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and mercifully spread the *Bhāgavatam* which describes Kṛṣṇa and reveals the *rasa* of His pastimes. (SB, 12.12.69)

The promise of the work is this:

The Supreme Lord becomes immediately captured in the heart of the accomplished devotees by hearing *Bhāgavatam*, and even by those who have suddenly developed a desire to hear it. This does not happen with other works. In the *Bhāgavatam* alone, created by the Lord Himself, is presented the real permanent object which can be understood by those without selfish intentions, and which bestows auspiciousness and release from the material world of miseries. In the *Bhāgavatam* alone is presented the process for attaining that highest object, devoid of all material goals and liberation. (SB, 1.1.2)

This is also indicated in the *catuḥ-śloki* in an esoteric way. The third verse was explained in *Bhāgavata Sandarbha*. This *prīti* as *apavarga* is shown to be composed of the highest mercy of the Lord and to be the result of hearing *Bhāgavatam*, for producing the highest result among the *puruṣārthas*. Nārada taught this by criticism to Vyāsa, who then manifested *Bhāgavatam*.

O venerable sage! You have not repeatedly described the glories of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa to the extent that you have glorified *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. (SB 1.5.9)

The word *ca* means “even.” He speaks of describing the glories of Kṛṣṇa with the hope that it would give rise to *prīti* for Kṛṣṇa. Nārada speaks the verse.

The next two *Anucchedas* criticize liberation from the perspective of *prīti/bhakti*.

Anuccheda 18

Prīti's superiority to other types of liberation is proclaimed with strong words. Statements criticizing other attainments will be given. That criticism is sometimes done by pointing out the *svarūpa* of *bhakti* and sometimes its associated qualities. The criticism by showing the *svarūpa* of *bhakti* is as follows:

The wise, suffering from various calamities of material life, continually bathe themselves in the lake of *bhakti*. Because of its intense bliss, they do not strive for liberation, though it is considered the highest goal, which comes of its own accord since they have attained everything by being the servants of the Lord. (SB, 5.6.17)

Yasyām refers to *bhakti*. They attain everything since liberation accompanies *bhakti*.

Nārada-pañcarātra says: All the perfections like liberation and astonishing material gains follow after the Lord's *bhakti* like servants.

Anuccheda 19

Liberation is criticized by citing factors accompanying *bhakti*, in the next case by cultivation of topics concerning His qualities:

My Lord, some fortunate souls have gotten relief from the fatigue of material life by diving into the vast nectar ocean of Your pastimes, which You enact when You manifest Your personal forms to propagate Your form, qualities, and pastimes. These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying the lotus of Your feet. (SB, 10.87.21)

Anuccheda 20 gives additional references proving devotees do not desire liberation because their *bhakti* is superior. *Anucchedas* 21-27 cite numerous references from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* praising various features of *bhakti*. *Anucchedas* 28-31 give additional references condemning liberation in favor of *bhakti*. *Anucchedas* 32-49 further establish *prīti* as the goal of all *sādhana*s as well as its overall superiority. These topics have already been summarized adequately for our purposes in the previous *Anucchedas*, so I've not included *Anucchedas* 20-49.

Here Śrī Jīva discusses the differences between devotees who have *prīti* and those who do not. He explains that those who have *prīti* desire to be associates of Kṛṣṇa in His *līlā*, which means they follow *rāgānuga-bhakti* to attain that goal. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* is discussed in detail in the upcoming sections.

Anuccheda 50

...The truth is this. There are two types of dedicated devotees: those who have not manifested *prīti* and those who have.

Those who have manifested *prīti* are of three types. The first is a *śānta* devotee who is simply fixed in realization of the Lord. The second type identifies himself as a particular associate of the Lord and derives *rasa* from serving and seeing the Lord.

The third type is actually a particular associate of the Lord [*nitya-siddhas*]. These types pray for *prīti* as the highest goal, appearing like persons who have not developed *prīti*.

Among those with *prīti*, the *śānta* devotees sometimes pray for seeing the Lord, but without service, since they do not have that desire. They are satisfied by attaining even once the merciful glance of the Lord.

...They do not desire more closeness to the Lord. When those who identify with the associates long for the Lord's special affection, they pray with a desire for special service to the Lord and for closeness to the Lord. Those prayers are expressions of *prīti* and nourish their devotion. This is a good quality. When they think out of humility that they cannot attain the Lord, they then pray only for having unbroken *prīti* for the Lord. This is a good quality.

Prayers for freedom from *samsāra* and the bliss of being near the Lord, devoid of the ecstasies of *prīti*, are not at all attractive to any of the dedicated devotees.

If somehow or other My devotee desires *svarga*, liberation, or residence in My abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. (SB, 11.20.33)

To some degree these other types of liberation can be useful in *bhakti*:

The devotees do not accept living [in My realms], having similar powers, staying close to Me, or having a similar form, what to speak of merging into Me, when these things are offered, unless it involves service to Me. (SB, 3.29.13)

Among the types of liberation, the devotees do not accept any one of them if they are devoid of service. However, *sāyujya* by its nature is without service since there is only oneness in it. The other types they choose according to their desire.

Sārūpya is useful for service, with a form of great beauty. In *Vaikuṇṭha* the eternal servants are of this type. In this world, servants with form and age the same as a young expert prince are seen gathered together and are praised. Thus the devotees accept these things according to how useful they are in their service.

In this way *prīti* is the goal. Whether those who have *prīti* as their goal desire or do not desire something else, other than their particular devotion, according to their type of

bhakti, [either way] they manifest themselves as an associate of the Lord endowed with all items necessary for service along with destruction of saṁsāra. They never waver from that position.

...The word *anvīm* means “hard to understand.” It thus refers to being an associate of the Lord. There is no other goal for the pure devotees for, according to the worship, one attains the result. (*Brahma-sūtra* 4.3.15)

Śruti: As one meditates upon Brahman in this world, he attains Brahman after departing from this world. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1) According to the commentary *kratu* means determination.

According to one's desire one develops determination. That determination leads to action. Action leads to result. (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.6)

According to worship one attains the result. (*Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*)

The Lord promises: As they surrender to Me, I respond to them. (BG, 4.11)

If they want to attain Me, they certainly attain Me. (*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*)

The destination of the *gopīs* is discussed in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*.

Rendering devotional service to Me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But your *prema* for Me, which has existed to bring the highest fortune, has caused you to attain Me directly. (SB, 10.82.44)

By the strength of these words, another meaning is given to the statements (which appear to be instructions on *jñāna*). The Lord Himself says to the *gopīs*:

O saintly girls, I understand that your real motive in this austerity has been to worship Me. That intent of yours is approved by Me and must come true.

The desire of those who fix their minds on Me does not lead to material desire for sense gratification, just as barleycorns burned by the sun and then cooked can no longer grow into new sprouts. (SB, 10.22.25-26)

Here we see more references confirming that the desires of the *jīva* are paramount in terms of the goals they attain by their endeavors. There were no statements implying or directly indicating that those desires are preprogrammed as part of the *jīva's svarūpa*. If that was the case, a significant factor like that certainly would have been noted and discussed in detail. But it was not.

Anucchedas 51-57 discuss the *prīti* of various devotees like the Queens of Dvārakā, the Pāṇḍavas, Mahārāja Parikṣit, King Pṛthu, and others.

We have read how Jīva Gosvāmī defines *prīti* in various ways: as *bhakti*, as *prema*, and more. Now he goes into even more detail about *prīti*, which surprisingly has a material counterpart.

Anuccheda 58 – Prīti Is Fully Spiritual

It has been established that *prīti* for Bhagavān is the highest *puruṣārtha*. Its *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* is shown in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* through analogy by Prahlāda:

May *prīti*, which for the materialist is constantly focused on material objects, never leave My heart because of remembering You.

This means the qualities of material *prīti* are similar to the qualities of *prīti* for the Lord. It does not mean that material *prīti* is *prīti* for the Lord, because it will be shown that there are similarities in qualities. On the other hand, material *prīti* is composed of the functions of *māyā-śakti* whereas *prīti* for the Lord is composed of the *svarūpa-śakti*.

The following should be said. The word *prīti* means happiness, also called joy, jubilation and bliss. *Priyatā* means *bhāva*, *hārda* or *sauhṛt* (love or friendship). Happiness (*sukha*) is a special awareness filled with jubilation (for the self).

Priyatā is special awareness with a favorable attitude towards an object, filled with jubilation, caused by experiencing the object, by desire for it, following one's favorable attitude to the object. Though *priyatā* includes happiness, it is different from happiness (*sukha*).

...There are four types of action to produce the desired result: producing, transforming, correcting, attaining. Some verbs are active, taking an object. Others are not. For instance, he makes a pot (producing). This means he produces a pot. He cooks rice (transforming). The rice becomes soft. He makes the rice soft. Other verbs like “to be” or “to shine” do not have an object.

One should not worry that *prīti*, because it is a form of awareness, has no object, since verbs like *cet*, “to become conscious” also have no object. *Prīti* is something which simply exists like *brahma-jñāna*, and not something that will be produced like knowledge of a sacrifice, dependent on rules.

Thus the word *prīti* means both happiness (for the self) and *priyatā* (affection for another person). The statement about the *prīti* of a person with no discrimination is made in the second statement. The experience of material attachment to material objects is happiness only.

The later statement in relation to the Lord is *priyatā* (affection for someone as well as happiness.) To interpret the last sentence to be, “May my *prīti* for material objects experienced (added phrase) not leave my heart, by remembrance of You.” is incorrect.

The affection for a son is similar to affection for the Lord since it has favorableness to the object as its main element. However it functions through *māyā-śakti*. That is clear from the *Gītā*:

The field along with its transformations is said in brief to consist of the five gross elements, false ego, *mahat-tattva*, *prakṛti*, the ten senses, the mind, and the five sense objects, qualities of the mind such as desire, hatred, happiness and distress, and the transformation of the elements called the body – which supports the *jīva* in his quest for enjoyment or liberation. (BG, 13.6-7)

It will be shown that *prīti* for the Lord is a function of the *svarūpa-śakti*. Thus it is correct to say that the qualities of affection for a material object and affection for the Lord are similar (having favorableness to the object). *Prīti* for the Lord is called *bhakti* since it is like affection for sons or parents, but fixed on the Supreme Lord. Because of this, in the previous verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* the word *bhakti* was used. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.20.18)

What Prahāda requests there, indicated by the *svarūpa* of *bhakti*, he also requests in the next verse, which is presently under discussion. This verse explains *bhakti* as *prīti*. Thus there is no redundant repetition. Since the two are the same, the Lord himself next explains their identity. *Bhaktir mayi tavāsty eva bhūyo 'py evaṁ bhaviṣyati*: may you have *bhakti* for Me now and in the future. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.20.20) Since the two are different words, *prīti* is explained in this way.

Some may take the phrase to be, *sā me hṛdayān māpasarpatu*, and interpret this as *sā me hṛdayān māpa sarpatu*: O lord of Lakṣmī! May affection (*prīti*) for material objects flee from my heart!” But making the statement of Prahāda a prayer for detachment is not proper. This is contrary to the text which says “May *prīti* (for the Lord) not leave my heart.”

...Using the example of material affection, it may be concluded that *prīti* is a special awareness filled with desire to follow after the Lord, with favorableness towards the Lord. Though the experience of material sweetness is similar to the experience of the Lord's sweetness it is also different.

...*Prīti* is directly indicated in the following:

Bhakti to the Supreme Lord without material desires, composed of actions of the senses to reveal sense objects related to the Lord, which conforms to *guru*'s instructions, with mind dedicated exclusively to the Lord, and which includes actions on the spontaneous level, is superior to liberation. (SB, 3.25.32)

Previously it was said:

From association with the best devotees, topics of My glorious pastimes become directly realized, bringing the devotee to *niṣṭhā*. Then the topics become an elixir for the heart and ears at the stage of *ruci*. By taste for these topics, *āśakti*, *bhāva*, and then *prema* (*bhakti* in

the verse) for the Lord who is the destroyer of material life, quickly develop in sequence. (SB, 3.25.25)

Though *rati* (*bhāva*) and *bhakti* in the verse are both *prīti*, *prīti* becomes most clear in *bhakti*, which is actually *prema*, characterized by intense *prīti*. Thus *prīti* is described by the word *bhakti* in this verse.

...The mind should concentrate on one form among the many forms of the Lord. The word *eva* indicates that the mind should not go elsewhere, concentrating on one form and then on another form. The word *ṛttiḥ* means special awareness filled with favorableness to the Lord. That *bhakti* is devoid of seeking results. It is natural: it arises without effort because of the beauty of the Lord, without having to use force.

This *bhakti* is *bhāgavatī*: it is *prīti*, related to the Lord. By relation to *prīti*, *bhakti* of any type becomes natural. Therefore the word *ṛtti* (which is natural, without effort) in the verse means primarily *prīti*. It is superior to liberation since it is said, *sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya*. It is not correct to say that *siddheḥ* refers to *jñāna* just to criticize it. *Jñāna* has been completely condemned for its result. Since this *prīti* is superior to liberation, it is definitely beyond the *guṇas* and furthermore is endowed with the highest bliss. Kapila speaks the verse.

There are many types and levels of *bhakti* depending on the practitioner. *Bhakti* that is infused with *prīti* is superior because it is more attractive to Kṛṣṇa. *Sādhakas* don't yet have *prema*, but they can saturate their *bhakti* with *prīti* to intensify their *sādhana* and *bhajana*.

In *Anuccheda* 59 Jīva Gosvāmī shows that *prīti* for Kṛṣṇa is beyond the *guṇas*, with many references given as supporting evidence. *Anuccheda* 60 describes the two types of bliss experienced by the Lord.

Anuccheda 60

The bliss experienced by the Lord is of two types: bliss from His *svarūpa* and bliss from His *svarūpa-śakti*. The *svarūpa-śakti*'s bliss is of two types: bliss from His mentality and bliss from His powers. Bliss in mind refers to the extensive bliss from *bhakti* in His devotees.

The bliss from His *svarūpa* and the bliss from His powers (arising from *svarūpa-śakti*) are described in the following:

O *brāhmaṇa*! Without the devotees, who take shelter of only Me, I do not desire to enjoy My own bliss (from His *svarūpa*) or My six great qualities (from His *svarūpa-śakti*). (SB, 9.4.64)

Na āśāse means "I do not desire." Viṣṇu speaks to Durvāsā.

In *Anuccheda* 61 Uddhava is shown as an example of his bliss since he is the best of devotees. In *Anuccheda* 62, Śrī Jīva explains that the inherent bliss (*ānanda*) of the *jīva* is not sufficient to give bliss to Kṛṣṇa. Only the *hlāḍinī-śakti* of Kṛṣṇa can accomplish that, and so Kṛṣṇa infuses that *śakti* in the hearts of His devotees as *prīti*, and the reciprocation of *prīti* between the Lord and His devotees is the cause of His intense bliss. The obvious implication of these facts is that *prīti*, *bhakti*, and *prema* are not inherent in the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*.

Anuccheda 62 – Hlāḍinī-śakti

As well, Sruti says: *Bhakti* brings the Lord and enables one to see Him. The Lord is controlled by *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is the greatest. (*Māṭhara-śruti*)

The following should be considered. What is the occasion which makes the Lord become mad with His bliss? It is not like the illusory bliss of material *sattva* of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, since scriptures say that the Lord is never overpowered by *māyā* and He is satisfied in Himself. It is not bliss of Brahman's *svārūpa* propounded by the impersonalists since that does not produce such an extreme condition. It is not the bliss of the *jīva*, since that is very meager.

Hlāḍinī, *sandhini* and *saṁvit śaktis* reside in You, the shelter of everything. The mixture of material bliss and suffering is not in You, who are devoid of material *guṇas*. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.12.69)

Thus, what remains as a cause is the Lord's *hlāḍinī-śakti*, the bliss of His *svārūpa-śakti*. By that the Lord experiences the bliss of His *svārūpa*, and by that bliss He becomes a blissful person. By that *śakti* He makes others experience that bliss. One may argue that because this *śakti* is always with the Lord, it will not produce extreme bliss. One should however consider the following.

The functioning of all types of intense bliss belonging to the *hlāḍinī-śakti* is placed in the devotees and is called *prīti* for the Lord. This must be inferred when all alternatives mentioned above have been exhausted. Because of this, the Lord partakes of the intense *prīti* which is in the devotees. The Lord and the devotee become mutually absorbed in that happiness.

The pure devotee is My very heart: what pains him pains Me. I am the heart of the pure devotee: what pleases him pleases Me. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know more than they do. (SB, 9.4.68)

Mahyam means *mama* (my). The identity of the two hearts is explained. They know nothing except Me. The non-difference is like saying “fire” to indicate flames, or iron which is hot, because of the extreme absorption in each other. Viṣṇu speaks to Durvāsā.

The atomic *jīvas* do not have sufficient bliss in the *ānanda* inherent in their *svārūpa* to give bliss to Kṛṣṇa. Only the *hlāḍinī-śakti* of Kṛṣṇa's *svārūpa-śakti* can give Him bliss, so He infuses

the *hlāḍinī-śakti* in the hearts of the *jīvas* which then empowers them to give bliss to Him by their *bhakti*, *prīti* and *prema*.

This describes the essence of *reciprocal* loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa, who is more merciful than we can ever comprehend, but whose mercy is always available to those who are eager and whose *bhakti* is infused with *prīti*.

Anuccheda 63

By this they mutually control each other:

O unconquerable Lord! Although You cannot be conquered by anyone, You are conquered by devotees who have control of their minds and senses. The devotees are conquered by You, who are merciful and give Yourself to those who worship You without material desires. (SB, 6.16.34)

The commentary of Śrīdhara Svāmī says, “O unconquerable Lord! Though You are not conquered by others, You are conquered by the devotees. You do this though You are independent, since You are most merciful. They, without desire, are also conquered by You, who give Yourself to persons without material desire.”

In *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, Śrīmukha (Viṣṇu) speaks to Prahlaḍa:

O child! Give up reverence mixed with fear arising from My greatness. I do not like this. Become free in your devotion among My devotees. Though I am full in My desires, I prefer that the devotee sees and speaks to Me out of affection without fear.

Though I am ever liberated I am bound to devotees by ropes of affection. Though unconquered, I am conquered by them. Though not controlled, I am controlled by them. He who has affection for Me gives up affection for friends. I am His and he is Mine. There is no friendship except that between us two.

Thus it was correctly stated that the function known as *prīti* for the Lord is not material. Rather it is the bliss of the *svarūpa-śakti* which is the Lord himself, who is controlled by bliss. *Vijñāna-ghana ānanda-ghanah sac-cid-ānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati*: the bliss full of knowledge resides in *bhakti yoga*, which is eternity knowledge and bliss. (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.79) Citraketu speaks to Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Kṛṣṇa cannot be controlled by rigidly following rules and regulations. He is controlled and conquered by affection – *bhakti* intensified with *prīti*. Only on that basis can one develop a mindset of friendship with Kṛṣṇa.

Anucchedas 64-69 discuss secondary characteristics of *prīti*. Here are some highlights.

Anuccheda* 64 – Secondary Characteristics of *Prīti

The *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of *prīti* was described. Now the *tatastha-lakṣaṇas* are given:

Remembering and inspiring other devotees to remember the Lord who destroys all sins, the devotees will develop hairs standing on end in ecstasy by *prema-bhakti* produced from *sādhana-bhakti*. (SB, 11.3.31)

The meaning is clear. Prabuddha speaks to Nimi.

***Anuccheda* 65**

It is also said:

Without *bhakti*, how can the heart melt? Without melting of the heart, how can one's hairs stand on end and tears come to the eyes? Without hair standing on end and tears in the eyes, how can the consciousness become purified? (SB, 11.14.23)

The commentary says, “Without hairs standing on end, how can *bhakti* be understood to be present? Without *bhakti*, how can the heart be purified?” The Lord speaks.

***Anuccheda* 66**

Thus the symptoms of *prīti* are melting of the heart and hairs standing on end etc. It should be understood that *bhakti* has not directly appeared if the heart is not pure, even though the heart may melt and hairs stand on end. Purity of the heart means giving up everything else and relying only on *prīti*. Thus *bhakti* was described as, *animittā svābhāviki*: without motive and natural. (SB, 3.25.23)

***Anuccheda* 68**

The special nature of *prīti* to the Lord is explained.

But the reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O *gopīs*, is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else. (SB, 10.32.20)

Some reciprocate with those who do not respond. Their compassion does not depend on experiencing an expression of *prīti* from the object of mercy. The *prīti* whose object is compassion for a person worthy of mercy is the life of a reciprocator's compassion.

Kṛṣṇa makes efforts so that His devotees manifest great *prema* for Him. When that *prema* manifests in the devotee, from that taste, there will appear astonishing *prema* for the devotee in the Lord. However, though He may show indifference to the devotees, the devotee's *prema* increases. This is its excellence. Kṛṣṇa speaks to the *gopīs*.

This last paragraph is especially significant as it reveals unique features of the reciprocal dealings between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and it gives us deeper insights into the sweetness of His inconceivable loving nature. Kṛṣṇa makes efforts to inspire His devotee's *prema* for Him, and that in turn causes astonishing *prema* to manifest in the Lord for His devotee! Truly the circle of love!

Types of Prīti

Now Jīva Gosvāmī explains when and how *prīti* manifests in various ways in the beginning stages, depending on the *adhikāra*, intentions, and goals of the practitioner. That includes imitation or incomplete *prīti*, as well as the dawning of real *prīti*. Details like this provide valuable insights for one to assess their progress and to understand how *prīti* is manifesting in themselves and others.

Anuccheda 70 – Types of Prīti

It has been established that there is *prīti* if there is sweetness in relating to the Lord alone, and there is incomplete *prīti* if there are some other goals.

Incomplete *prīti* is of two types: the appearance of an *ābhāsa* (fallacious appearance) of *prīti*, and a slight manifestation of actual *prīti*.

The slight manifestation has two varieties: a temporary manifestation of its ray, and a condition of *prīti* manifesting.

Where there are goals other than the Lord (and not the Lord), there is an *ābhāsa* of *prīti*.

Where there is no goal of *prīti* for the Lord (though the person recognizes the Lord) there is the temporary manifestation of its ray.

If there is the goal of *prīti* for the Lord and other things mixed, by good fortune there is a condition of *prīti* starting to manifest.

The mixture of other elements should be minor. There are two types: almost destroyed and a trace.

From the almost destroyed elements arises the first stage of the dawn of *prīti*.

From the trace of other elements arises a conspicuous dawn of *prīti*.

Until the first stage of a dawn of *prīti*, it is considered an indirect manifestation. A conspicuous dawn of *prīti* is a direct manifestation of *prīti*.

Where there are no other elements mixed at all, one can see a manifestation of *prīti*'s power. Starting from manifested dawn, one becomes a *jīvan-mukta* on the path of *bhakti*. When such persons attain the status of being associates of the Lord, they are called *parama-muktas*. Those who are eternal associates (not by attainment) are called *nitya-muktas*.

The imitation (*ābhāsa*) *prīti* is as follows:

The unfortunate *yogī* who has developed love for the Lord, full of all sweet qualities, whose heart is somewhat soft because of devotion, whose body hairs stand on end in ecstasy, who is constantly overcome with intense tears of joy, gradually withdraws his hook-like mind from the Lord's form. (SB, 3.28.34)

By performance of *bhakti* mixed with *yoga* as previously described one attains *bhāva* for the Lord by *bhakti* activities such as remembrance. The *yogī*'s heart, endowed with *bhāva* and sweetness by meditation, then gradually becomes free of that *bhāva* because that *bhakti* was performed as a secondary part of *yoga*.

This produces the cheating fault of desire for merging. *Dharmaḥ projjhitaḥ kaitavo'tra paramaḥ: bhakti* completely rejects cheating. (SB 1.1.2) The affix *pra* indicates the desire for liberation. This is cheating. The word *baḍiśa* (hook) indicates hardness, no knowledge of *rasa*, pride and performing *sādhana*s for one's own purpose only.

The pure devotees never reject the object of meditation in this way. Parikṣit says:

The person with a pure heart does not give up the root of the feet of Kṛṣṇa. He is like a traveler, who, giving up all sufferings after earning wealth, does not leave his house. SB, 2.8.6

Nārada says:

Oh! The person who serves Mukunda will never under any condition return to the material world, unlike practitioners of other processes. Remembering the embrace of the Lord's lotus feet, eager for that taste he has experienced, he will not desire to give up those feet again. (SB, 1.5.19)

Those who accept *rasa* do not give up the Lord. Others are considered to be like iron or stone. The Lord also does not give up the devotee. Brahmā says:

O master! You do not give up the lotus hearts of Your devotees who smell through their ears the fragrance of Your lotus bud feet brought by the wind of the Vedas, and take Your lotus feet as the greatest treasure through *prema-bhakti*. (SB, 3.9.5)

The Lord does not give up the hearts of His devotees. In the example of an imitation of *prīti* (*ābhāsa*), one can also refer to Kapila's description of the *yogī*:

...The previous verse (SB, 3.25.25) spoke only of *bhakti*: *śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*. Later Kapila also speaks of the qualities of *bhakti*. *bhaktir siddher gariyasi*: *bhakti* is greater than liberation (SB, 3.25.32) *Naikātmataṁ me spṛhayanti kecit*: they do not desire to become one with Brahman. (SB, 3.25.34)

Kapila gives the primary meaning of *bhakti*, disregarding liberation. The destruction of the covering of *māyā* is a secondary, accompanying event to *bhakti*. *Jarayaty āśu yā koṣam*: the subtle body quickly withers away. (SB, 3.35.33) Having described liberation using *bhakti* with the help of *jñāna* (SB, 3.25.26), it is said to be a secondary process. It is an imitation (*ābhāsa*) of *bhakti* as was shown in the beginning.

All the *devatās*, overwhelmed with happiness on seeing him, immediately fell down like rods and then slowly rose and offered prayers. (SB, 6.9.30)

It should be understood that the *devatās* who expressed devotion mainly because of attaining their kingdom after destruction of Vṛtrāsura were examples of imitation *bhakti*. Kapila speaks the verse.

The Appearance of Prīti in the Devotee

In this series of five *Anuccheda*s, Śrī Jīva explains how *prīti* appears in the heart and mind of a devotee.

Anuccheda 71

The appearance of the temporary ray of *prīti* is described

Persons who only once absorb their mind in Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, even if it occurs in dreams, or the slight attraction to the Lord's qualities, do not see the servants of Yama since they have accomplished all atonement by that remembrance. (SB, 6.1.19)

Guṇa-rāgi means a slight tinge of attraction to the Lord's qualities. It does not refer to direct *prīti* with true knowledge of the sweetness of the Lord's qualities. Thus, because they do not take the Lord as their goal, only "once" do they absorb their minds in Him. This is the case of a person superior to Ajāmila and others, since they do not even see Yama's servants at all (whereas Ajāmila saw the servants Yama). Śukadeva speaks the verse.

Anuccheda 72

The first dawn of *prīti* is described.

The devotees who are attracted to Kṛṣṇa, immediately giving up strong attachment to body and other material objects, attain the highest stage of life, *pārama-haṁsyam*, in which lack of hatred and absorption in Kṛṣṇa are the natural qualities. (SB, 1.18.22)

Antyam pāramahaṁsyam means a devotee *paramahansa* (renunciate). Lack of hatred is an accompanying quality of the devotee. Sūta speaks the verse.

Anuccheda 73

Evident dawn of *prīti* is shown in *Priyavrata*.

O sage! How did the great devotee and *ātmārāma* Priyavrata enjoy household life, which is a cause of bondage to *karma* and defeats even a pure soul? (SB, 5.1.1)

Great *brāhmaṇa*! My doubt is that though he was attached to wife, house and children, he still attained perfection and always thought of Kṛṣṇa. (SB, 5.1.4)

After the question of Parīkṣit, Śukadeva speaks in prose:

What you have said is true, but those whose minds are absorbed in the sweet taste of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord do not generally give up the auspicious path of topics of the Lord, who is dear to the greatest devotees, though there may be some obstacle. (SB, 5.1.5)

The commentary says, “*Bādham* means accepting this proposal, it is rejected.” It is true that he did not become absorbed in family life. He could remain detached by the power of his previous practice, though by the power of the obstacles the inclination for attachments could arise. That is what he explains.”

The Lord explains to Pṛthu:

Samsāra takes place only because of identification with the subtle body, composed of intelligence, sense objects, sense organs, and sense *devatās*. The devotees, bound to Me by friendship, are not disturbed on seeing the happiness and distress of this world. (SB, 4.20.12)

Indradyumna did not become angry when cursed by Agastya to become an elephant. When devotees give up their conduct of great respect for others, which should be practiced by the Vaiṣṇava, this is done in order to give teachings:

Seeing the two sons of the *devatās* intoxicated by opulence and false prestige, Nārada, in order to show them special mercy, while giving a curse, sang as follows. (SB, 10.10.7)

Parīkṣit took the opportunity of being cursed by the *brāhmaṇa* to come close to Kṛṣṇa.

For me, whose impure action was the sin of disrespecting an innocent *brāhmaṇa*, and whose heart was very attached to family life, the Lord has come in the form of the *brāhmaṇa*'s curse, which has become the cause of detachment from material life. By the Lord's presence the attached person quickly becomes fearless. (SB, 1.19.14)

Anuccheda 74

Other signs of the evident dawn of *prīti* are described.

Prahlāda's bad associates became absorbed in the Lord and experienced the highest bliss by their association with a devotee who had nothing to do with anything material and by engaging in the service of the Lord's lotus feet. (SB, 7.4.42)

The commentary says, "The minds of the bad associates became peaceful and experienced the highest bliss." *Śamam* can also be explained as "equality in the mind." Nārada speaks to Yudhiṣṭhira.

Anuccheda 75

Visible power of *prīti* can be seen in Śukadeva and others.

Mad with love for the Lord, he did not know his own happiness or suffering. He was overflowing with the highest bliss, O great lady! (*Nārada-pañcarātra*)

Bhakti, called *prīti*, has been shown with different types. It is shown in the *Gītā* by its *svarūpa* and by its qualities:

I am the source of everything. Due to Me, everything operates. Convinced by this knowledge, the intelligent persons, endowed with love, worship Me.

With minds absorbed in Me, completely dependent on Me, mutually informing each other about Me and speaking about Me, they continuously experience satisfaction and enjoyment. (BG, 10.8-9)

Now the main point of these statements about *prīti* to the Lord should be discussed. *Prīti*, by its own inclination, disregarding all rules because it has somehow appeared in the heart, rejoices in the Lord of unparalleled sweetness, the moon producing light of the highest bliss, out of continuous pure *sattvic* rapture beyond matter, which is filled with

unlimited pastimes giving life to the material *sattva-guṇa*, and which gives auspiciousness to the whole world.

Prīti cannot tolerate other objectives, being uninterrupted by any object other than the Lord. *Prīti* is a form of awareness with desire for the Lord and obedience to the Lord, imbued with favorableness to the Lord. *Prīti* has as its body the devotee's mental functions. *Prīti* enlivens this body with its own potency since it is full of nectar. It is visibly decorated with pearl-like tears and a necklace of qualities which the devotee conceals as his own secret.

Prīti by nature is the source of all qualities, and makes all results of unlimited *puruṣārthas* her servant. *Prīti* is completely dedicated to the noble vow of chastity to the Lord. *Prīti* is a form of the Lord which is the only means of attracting the Lord. *Prīti*, stemming from the Lord and dedicated to the Lord, serves Him at all times. Though continuous, *prīti* makes its appearance in various degrees by itself, according to the degree that the Lord appears as the object of love.

Since Kṛṣṇa was shown to be *Svayam Bhagavān* in *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, the best *prīti* is established in relation to Kṛṣṇa alone. Taking support of the plentiful particulars of *prīti* already described, the method should be shown. Elements other than *prīti* that are employed act to nourish *prīti* only, since *prīti* alone gives so much more results. The completeness of *prīti* is shown by describing the completeness of the appearance of *Svayam Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa:

Today our birth and knowledge of spiritual and material topics have all become perfect because we have been able to associate with you, the goal of all saintly persons. You are the ultimate, supreme blessing. (SB, 10.84.21)

Associating with You, Kṛṣṇa, the goal of persons dedicated only to You, our birth (Vasiṣṭha, four Kumāras, Vāmadeva, Mārkaṇḍeya, Nārada, Vyāsa, persons who had realized Brahman, those who understood various *bhakti-rasas* of the Lord, and those who had seen various incarnations of the Lord) has become successful today, at this opportunity, special because of Your special appearance. This success is ultimate, superior to all exalted *puruṣārthas* produced by other incarnations. Great sages speak to the Lord.

Prīti is that aspect of *bhakti* which focuses on deep affection for Kṛṣṇa in the context of *vraja-līlā*. It is the core element that attracts Him the most. As mentioned, practicing *sādhakas* have not yet developed *prema-bhakti*, so they cannot give *prema* to Kṛṣṇa, but they can give their *prīti* to Him, and that is a key point to understand.

Anucchedas 76-80 provide many *sāstric* references showing examples of various types of *prīti* in devotees for Kṛṣṇa. There is also a discussion about Kṛṣṇa's human form being the most astonishing – even to Kṛṣṇa. They are not necessary to include here.

This concludes the review of *prīti* from *Prīti Sandarbha*. Now we will examine a summary of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which is the *abhidheya* taught by Lord Caitanya for developing *prīti*, leading to *prema-bhakti* – the *prayojana*.

Rāgānuga-bhakti – Intense Desire is the Essence

The Abhidheya Taught by Lord Caitanya

I explored the topic of *rāgānuga-bhakti* in full detail in my first book, *The Realization and Manifestation of Your Eternal Identity – Identity Transformation Through Rāgānuga-bhakti*, so I'm going to be brief regarding the basics, and focused on specific aspects related to this treatise.

First, a few key references from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* which establish the fact that Lord Caitanya came specifically to teach the *abhidheya* of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which was one of the primary external reasons for His appearance. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* is the only means by which one can develop and attain a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā* – *prema-bhakti*. *Prema-bhakti* is the goal – the *prayojana* – as taught by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The Lord's desire to appear was born from two reasons: the Lord wanted to taste the sweet essence of the mellows of love of God (*prema-rasa*), and He wanted to propagate devotional service in the world on the platform of spontaneous attraction (*rāga-mārga-bhakti*). Thus He is known as supremely jubilant and as the most merciful of all. CC, 1.4.15-16

From Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport:

These reciprocal exchanges of mellows [*rasas*] are called *rāga-bhakti*, or devotional service to the Lord in transcendental rapture. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants to make known to all the conditioned souls that He is more attracted by *rāga-bhakti* than *vidhi-bhakti*, or devotional service under scheduled regulations.

...He is also causelessly merciful, and He wants to bestow upon us this privilege of *rāga-bhakti*.

[Lord Kṛṣṇa thought:] “All the universe is filled with the conception of My majesty, but love weakened by that sense of majesty does not satisfy Me.

If one regards Me as the Supreme Lord and himself as a subordinate, I do not become subservient to his love, nor can it control Me.

In whatever transcendental mellow (*bhāva*) My devotee worships Me, I reciprocate with him. That is My natural behavior.” CC, 1.4.17-19

“If one cherishes pure loving devotion to Me, thinking of Me as His son, His friend or His beloved, regarding himself as great and considering Me His equal or inferior, I become subordinate to him.” CC, 1.4.21-22

“Then, by hearing about the pure love of the residents of Vraja, devotees will worship Me on the path of spontaneous love (rāga-mārga), abandoning all rituals of religiosity and fruitive activity.” CC, 1.4.33

These statements by Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda leave no room for speculation about the importance of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Lord Caitanya taught Sanātana Gosvāmī the *sādhana* of *rāgānuga-bhakti* in *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 22, and later He taught the same to Rūpa Gosvāmī who wrote *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* to elaborate on what he learned from Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Those details are in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, First Wave, Chapter 2, on *Sādhana-bhakti*.

Vaidhī-bhakti is not sufficient to help one attain the specific goal of *prema-bhakti* in *vraja-līlā*. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is the *sādhana* practiced to attain the realms of *Vaikuṇṭha* with knowledge of Lord Viṣṇu’s supreme divinity and unlimited opulence – *aiśvarya-bhāva*. In *Bhakti Sandarbha*, after explaining that *rāgānuga* does not depend on scriptural injunctions, Jīva Gosvāmī compares *vaidhī* and *rāgānuga*.

...Therefore, *vaidhī-bhakti* is weak because it depends on scriptural injunctions, whereas *rāgānuga* is very powerful being propelled independently. Therefore, when *rāgānuga* appears, it is marked by an absence of taste for anything unrelated to *bhakti*.

...Because *rāgānuga* is independent of any injunctions, the *dāsyā* and *sakhya* of *rāgānuga* are different from the *dāsyā* and *sakhya* of *vaidhī*.

...Therefore, in *rāgānuga*, the system prescribed for *vaidhī-bhakti* is not strictly followed, but only the methodology that relates to the *rāgātmikā* associates of the Lord. BhS, Anuccheda 310

Therefore, *rāgānuga* is certainly proper, and it is more powerful even than *vaidhī*. The rules and regulations of scripture are given simply to bring the practitioner to the point of absorption in devotion, as was shown above. When the mental disposition is drawn by a specific taste, it automatically creates a particular type of absorption, which cannot be generated through scriptural ordinances, because absorption is the natural characteristic of the mind.

In this matter, absorption can take place immediately, even through an unfavorable mood that is completely forbidden, let alone absorption that develops through a favorable disposition. And by the influence of this absorption, the unfavorable mood is dropped along with all unwanted desires. There are also examples in scripture that demonstrate the power of the path of natural attraction. And if one has developed favorable attraction, he or she has already attained the goal aspired for by devotees who are completely focused in exclusive devotion. BhS, Anuccheda 311

...So, because it is specifically the adoption of *rāgānuga* worship that quickly leads to this absorption in Him, Kṛṣṇa has not spoken about *vaidhī* worship in regard to Himself in the eleventh canto of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, rather, the discussion of *vaidhī* there relates only to His four-armed feature. BhS, *Anuccheda* 325

All that being said, *vaidhī-bhakti* can also function as a stepping stone, if practiced with the understanding and aim of eventually becoming qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Jīva Gosvāmī explains this in *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

O King, having taken to the path [of devotion], a person is never deviated. Even if he were to run along the path with eyes closed, he would neither slip nor fall. SB, 11.2.35

By this principle it is understood that the path consisting of rules and regulations has been created in order to facilitate proper entry upon the path of perfection by initiating some form of practice, as well as to lead the mind gradually to the point of absorption in devotion.

Otherwise, because of the absence of this taste, which makes one continuously favorable to the Lord's devotion, and because of the inability to apply oneself to the rules and regulations along the path, the practitioner is obstructed by the disturbances arising from the body and mind, from nature, and from providence.

The rules and regulations are not created for one who is naturally drawn to devotion, because by taste alone, such a person will be absorbed in the specific manner of *rāgātmikā* devotion, which captivates the Lord. This is stated by the Lord Himself in verses such as this:

Those who worship Me with unalloyed devotion, whether they know or don't know the extent of My being, who I am, and of what My nature is constituted, I consider to be the best of all devotees. SB, 11.11.33

...The path of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is honored simply by feeling special regard for the *rāgātmikā* associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Yet, a person in whom such *ruci* as defined above has not yet sprouted (*ajāta-ruci*) should still execute *rāgānuga-bhakti* combined with the practices of *vaidhī-bhakti*.

Those who have acquired this *ruci* (*jāta-ruci*) and are respected within a larger social framework should also execute *rāgānuga* mixed with *vaidhī* in order to set an ideal for others. In this mixture, *vaidhī* should be performed as far as possible so that it becomes one in nature with *rāgānuga*. BhS, *Anuccheda* 312

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the connection between *vidhī* and *rāga* early on in 1971 in a *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* lecture. Of course, in retrospect, it is highly doubtful that anyone understood exactly what he was talking about.

Worship according to the *pāñcarātri*ka-vidhi is called *vidhi-mārga*, and worship according to the *bhāgavata*-vidhi principles is called *rāga-mārga*. (SB, 4.24.45-46, Purport) This *arca*, this is *pāñcarātri*kī-vidhi. According to *pāñcarātri*ka system, *Nārada-pancaratra*, this worship of the Deity is there.

And *bhāgavata-mārga*, the path of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, is simply *śravaṇam kīrtanam*. Out of the nine processes recommended, *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam*, so up to *śravaṇam kīrtanam smaraṇam*, that is *Bhāgavata-mārga*. That is the best.

And *pāda-sevanam arcanam vandanaṁ dāsyam*, that is *pāñcarātri*kī-vidhi. So both the *vidhis*, both the systems have been introduced. One will help the other. That is the way. Simply *Bhāgavata-mārga*... Just like in the *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, in the beginning, is simply *śravaṇam – param satyam dhīmahī; janmādy asya – smaraṇam*, simply remembering, memorizing the Supreme Truth.

But, of course, the *pāñcarātri*ka-vidhi is recommended in the Second Canto. That, another *pāñcarātri*ka-vidhi, is worshipping the gigantic form of the Lord. These things are there. But both, combined together, it is very much helpful. *Bhāgavata-mārga*. *Bhāgavata-mārga* will help the *pāñcarātri*ka-mārga, or process, and the *pāñcarātri*ka process will help *Bhāgavata* process. Both together is helpful.

...And, so actually, *Bhāgavata-mārga* is very strong. That is sufficient. But without *pāñcarātri*ka-vidhi this polluted body, polluted mind of the devotee, cannot be purified. Therefore, both the processes should be adopted in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

The external *aṅgas* of *vaidhī-bhakti* and *rāgānuga-bhakti* are the same, but the differences are in one's mindset and motivations. Plus, *rāgānuga-bhakti* has a specific internal meditation practice in addition to the external *aṅgas*. It all depends on one's desires and the quality of association and guidance one has, as we will learn in the next section.

The foundational principle that facilitates engaging in *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa is the fact that all *jīvas* have an eternal connection with Kṛṣṇa as servants – *jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa*. (CC, 2.20.108). That eternal relationship is known as *sambandha*, which implies all the fundamental aspects of the *jīva's* connection with Kṛṣṇa (Paramātmā). We learned about those aspects in our detailed examination of the *jīva's svarūpa*.

By further development of the principle of *sambandha*, a *jīva* can become qualified to practice the *abhidheya – rāgānuga-bhakti* – and can thus become eligible to attain an intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā – prema-bhakti* – the *prayojana*. Lord Caitanya explained this to Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

One's relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*sambandha*), activities in terms of that relationship (*abhidheya*), and the ultimate goal of life (*prayojana*) [to develop love of God] – these three subjects are explained in every aphorism of the

Vedānta-sūtra, for they form the culmination of the entire Vedānta philosophy. CC, 1.7.146

It is very important to understand that *rāgānuga-bhakti* is not an arbitrary practice – it requires very specific qualifications – *adhikāra*. Without being genuinely qualified one's practice will be a fruitless imitation and a disturbance to Vaiṣṇava society. Thus, one must first learn what those qualifications are and how one becomes qualified.

Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *rāgānuga-bhakti* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* along with the qualifications to be eligible to practice it. The commentaries of Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura provide further clarification.

Rāgānuga-bhakti is defined as that *bhakti* which follows after the *rāgātmika-bhakti* found distinctively in the inhabitants of Vraja.

In order to define *rāgānuga-bhakti* first *rāgātmika-bhakti* should be discussed.

Rāga is defined as spontaneous, deep thirst for the object of love. *Bhakti* that is impelled exclusively by such a thirst is called *rāgātmika-bhakti*.

There are two types of *rāgātmika-bhakti*: that impelled by conjugal feelings (*kāma-rūpā*) and that impelled by other relationships (*sambandha-rūpā*). BRS, 1.2.270-273

From these two types of *rāgātmika-bhakti*, two types of *rāgānuga-bhakti* (*sādhana-bhakti*), called *kāmānuga* and *sambandhānuga-bhakti*, are derived.

The qualification for *rāgānuga-bhakti* is as follows: That person who is greedy for attaining a *bhāva* similar to that of the inhabitants of Vraja – who are fixed solely in *rāgātmika-bhakti* – is qualified for *rāgānuga-bhakti*. BRS, 1.2.290-291

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī:

Having described the characteristics of *rāgātmika-bhakti* of the *siddha-bhaktas*, the author now describes the characteristics of *rāgānuga-bhakti* of the *sādhakas* (practitioners). He who is greedy to attain a *bhāva* similar to that of the people of Vraja – who are fixed in *rāgātmika-bhakti* – is qualified for *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

The appearance of that greed (*lobha*) is indicated when the intelligence does not depend on rules of scripture and logic, after realizing to some degree the sweetness of their (the inhabitants of Vraja) love through the process of hearing from the scriptures. BRS, 1.2.292

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

When a person realizes to some degree the sweetness of the love and activities of the inhabitants of Vraja through hearing from the scriptures, such as the *Bhāgavatam*, which describe these *siddha* devotees, His intelligence may develop disregard for the injunctions of scripture and logic, though logic is certainly employed.

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī:

One can infer that greed has arisen in the person from recognizing this symptom. Nevertheless, it is not possible to say that the condition described is the real essence of that greed, because that greed does not always include disregard for scriptural injunctions and logic as a necessary component.

Remembering the Vṛndāvana form of Kṛṣṇa and His dear associates who have inclinations for service similar to one's own, absorbing oneself in hearing topics related to them, one should always live in Vraja. BRS, 1.2.294

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī:

Now starts the description of the method of *rāgānuga-sādhana*.

Following after the inhabitants of Vraja, one should perform service in one's physical body (*sādhaka-rūpa*), and in one's *siddha* body (*siddha-rūpa*), with a desire for a particular *bhāva* [of a Vraja associate - *vraja-lokānusārataḥ*]. BRS, 1.2.295

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Sādhaka-rūpa refers to the physical body of the practitioner. *Siddha-rūpa* refers to the body which is suitable for one's desired service, and which has been developed by internal meditation. (*siddha-rūpeṇa antas-cintitabhiṣṭa-tat-sevopayogi-dehena*) One serves with a desire for the particular *bhāva* or *rati* of an associate of Kṛṣṇa situated in Vraja.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

One performs service with the *sādhaka-rūpa* – the present body – and with the *siddha-rūpa* – the body which is suitable for serving Vraja Kṛṣṇa in the particular type of *rati* or *bhāva* one desires, and which appears through inner contemplation, with a desire for a particular *rati* directed to one's beloved Kṛṣṇa situated in Vṛndāvana.

One should follow after the dear devotees of Kṛṣṇa such as Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa-maṇjarī and those following after them – persons such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana

Gosvāmīs. Accordingly, one should perform mental service (*mānasī-sevā*) in one's *siddha-rūpa*, following after the examples of Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Śrī Rūpa-maṇjarī and others.

In one's physical body, one should perform services using one's body, following after persons such as Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs situated in Vraja. By the word *vraja-loka*, one should understand persons situated in Vraja – Rādhā, Candrāvalī and others. Following after them, one should perform service using one's physical body also.

Let's analyze several key aspects of this summary of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. What exactly does “greed” (*lobha*, *laulyam*) mean? It means one has developed an intense desire to be a participant in Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlā* in Goloka Vṛndāvana – an associate like the other *nitya-siddha vraja-vāsīs*. That desire is then focused and nourished by following a *vraja-vāsī* whose *rāga* and *bhāva* are similar to what one aspires to develop.

How exactly does *lobha* manifest – what is its genesis? Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains this in *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*.

There are two causes for the appearance of greed:

- (1) the mercy of Kṛṣṇa
- (2) the mercy of another *anurāgī* devotee

There are again two kinds of mercy bestowed by a devotee:

- (1) mercy bestowed by a *rāgānuga* devotee in a previous life – *prāktana*
- (2) mercy bestowed by a *rāgānuga* devotee in the present birth – *ādhunika*

The *prāktana* devotee takes shelter of the lotus feet of a *rāgānuga guru* after the greed has arisen in him, and the *ādhunika* will get that greed only after having surrendered to the feet of such a *guru*.

It is said: “The only causes of the appearance of greed are the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Therefore, some call the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, *puṣṭi mārga* (the path of mercy).” (BRS, 1.2.309). RVC, 1.6

From these statements we learn that one may have awakened some level of these desires in one's past life following the path of *bhakti*, which then resurfaces in this current life, possibly even before one meets a suitable *guru* for guidance. And note that there was no mention of a specific point in a devotee's progress when greed will automatically or mechanically awaken, since it is solely a matter of bestowed mercy.

In other words, it is not that greed can only manifest at the stage of *niṣṭhā* or later, implying that one must first be “advanced” for greed to manifest. That is not the criterion for the awakening of that intense desire in one's heart. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains in

Rāga-vartma-candrikā that one may become qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti* because of the presence of greed, even before one attains *niṣṭhā*.

Now it will be described how the *rāgānuga-bhakta* gradually advances through the stages of *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci* and *āśakti* up to the stage of *prema* and the direct attainment of the beloved Deity.

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* it is said that, “Those who are especially attracted to the mood of the *vraja-vāsīs* and thus perform *rāgānuga-bhakti*, will attain that abundance of eagerness that is needed for performing *rāgānuga-bhajana* and will take birth in *Vraja*, singly, or in groups of two or three at the same time.”

Here the word *anurāgaugha* means “that eagerness that makes one qualified for doing *rāgānuga-bhajana*”. The *anurāga* mentioned here does not refer to the *sthāyī-bhāva* of that name, because the *sthāyī-bhāva* named *anurāga* cannot be attained within a material body. RVC, 2.7

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Rāmānanda Rāya tells Lord Caitanya:

Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā*) cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price – that is, intense greed (*laulyam*) to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay. CC, 2.8.70

From Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Purport:

The previous two verses are included in the *Padyāvalī* (13, 14), an anthology compiled by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Verse 69 refers to devotional service in faith, and verse 70 refers to devotional service rendered out of intense greed.

The first is devotional service rendered in accordance with the regulative principles [*vaidhī-bhakti*], and the second refers to spontaneous loving service of the Lord without extraneous endeavor [*rāgānuga-bhakti*].

Henceforward the basic principle underlying the talks between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Rāya will be spontaneous loving service to the Lord. The regulative principles according to the injunctions of the *śāstras* are necessary insofar as one’s original dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not spontaneously awakened.

After that greed has begun to manifest in one’s heart, how are those desires nourished and intensified? The process is that one must gradually and systematically become absorbed in *vraja-līlā* by regular *śravaṇam* of the *Bhāgavatam*, and specifically the books written by the previous *ācāryas*, such as *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, *Kṛṣṇa-karnāmṛta*, *Ānanda-Vṛndāvana-campu*, and so on.

Those books describe the *nitya-līlā* in the spiritual world, i.e., the *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*, which is somewhat different from *bhauma-līlā*. It follows a twenty-four hour cycle, divided into eight segments, during which different pastimes take place which are ideally suited to maximize the *rasas* for those time periods.

Kṛṣṇa doesn't grow up in the spiritual world like He does in *bhauma-līlā*. He is eternally situated at His ideal age for the *līlās* of *mādhurya-rasa* – fifteen years old, going on sixteen. All the other *vraja-vāsīs* are similarly situated in their eternal ages, which are perfectly suited for their desired relationships with Kṛṣṇa.

Also, there is no long-term separation in the pastimes in the spiritual world like there is in *bhauma-līlā*. Kṛṣṇa never leaves Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world for extended periods of time like He does in *bhauma-līlā*.

Regarding the awakening of these desires in one's heart, take special note of Jīva Gosvāmī's statement in his commentary to BRS, 1.2.292 above, "When a person realizes to some degree the sweetness of the love and activities of the inhabitants of Vraja...". This indicates he isn't talking about fully developed intense greed at that point in a person's progress, but it is sufficient to establish one on the path to becoming qualified. And most importantly, it is a sign that those spontaneous desires are starting to awaken in one's heart.

Here is more confirmation of this same point from Jīva Gosvāmī's *Bhakti Sandarbha*, where he encourages the pursuit of hearing related to one's initial inclinations even though they are not fully matured.

For this reason we will now discuss *rāgānuga-bhakti*, the practice of devotion following in the wake of the moods of natural affection. When a person develops a taste for the aforesaid specific *rāga* [i.e., any of the four major *rasas*], even though that *rāga* itself has not arisen in her or him, the heart becomes like a crystal, shining as it reflects the rays of the moon of that *rāga*.

By hearing about this *rāga* from scripture or from one's teacher, one develops a taste for the actions of the *rāgātmika* associates also, that are expressions of this *rāgātmika-bhakti*. Then by adhering to the *rāga* of a particular associate of the Lord, according to one's taste, one executes devotion, which is called *rāgānuga*. BhS, Anuccheda 310

From these statements it is clear that greed develops gradually in stages, from the awakening of an initial inclination, and progressively evolving to intense focused desires. Reading the *līlā* books mentioned reveals the overwhelmingly intense desires manifest by the *vraja-vāsīs*, especially Rādhā and the other *gopīs*. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* is designed to facilitate the transformation of one's desires to that level of intensity by following (*anuga*) the deep *rāga* of one of the *vraja-vāsīs*.

In his commentary of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Viśvanātha Cakravartī further emphasizes immersing oneself in reading about Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlā*, explaining that these literatures are not ordinary, and the effects produced from reading them are extraordinary.

To show mercy to his devotees the Lord engages in such pastimes, by hearing which the humans become dedicated to Him. (SB, 10.33.36) UN, 3.27

From Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary:

The independent activities of the Lord however, are for the benefit of the devotee. To show mercy to the devotees the Lord performs such pastimes. A person who has taken a human body, on hearing these pastimes, becomes completely dedicated to the Lord. The pastimes have a power like that of jewels, mantras or herbs so that they produce complete dedication to the Lord. They do not create sinful effects.

...Anyone who faithfully hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord's pure devotional service. Thus he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart. SB 10.33.39

...Thus, just from hearing constantly and becoming addicted to any topics of Kṛṣṇa, one attains perfection, and if one hears topics of the rāsa-līlā one attains even higher perfection. One should always hear and become addicted to the five chapters on rāsa-līlā.

Śrī Viśvanātha emphasized that reading these *līlās* “does not create sinful effects”. Quite the contrary. It's hard to imagine that a sincere and eager devotee would read these *līlās* and not awaken desires to be a participant in them in a particular type of relationship. That is precisely why these *līlās* have been made available to us, i.e., to stimulate and nourish our spiritual desires in the most favorable and direct way.

Kaniṣṭhās generally do not have the *adhikāra* to properly understand and realize the transcendental nature of these *līlās*. For those in the beginning stages on the path of *bhakti* systematic study of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* through all twelve Cantos is recommended. Jīva Gosvāmī also states in *Bhakti Sandarbha* that if one becomes sexually agitated when reading about Kṛṣṇa's intimate *līlās* then one should stop, as it is an indication one does not yet have the required *adhikāra*.

In his *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* commentary, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains how hearing and chanting causes these gradual transformations, along with revelations of the special sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlās*.

To the degree that the *ātmā* becomes purified by hearing and chanting My glories, a person is able to perceive My real form and qualities and experience their sweetness, just as the eye when smeared with special ointment is able to see finer objects. SB, 11.14.26

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

Starting with the first service, in proportion to the purification of the ātmā by pure bhakti, and in proportion to the hearing, chanting and remembering, one attains various degrees

of realization of My sweetness. In proportion to hearing and chanting My glories, one sees the real nature of My form and pastimes with an experience of sweetness.

For those who do regularly read these *līlās*, the effects are powerfully transformative as indicated. But the key is to read them with eager intention. In *Jaiva-dharma* Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains that to get the full benefit of reading these *līlā* books, it should be done systematically, rather than casually without a particular focus.

Vijaya: What is irregular hearing (*krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā*)?

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: *Krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā* is hearing about *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in an irregular and unmethodical manner. Hearing *kṛṣṇa-līlā* with irresolute intelligence results in this sort of unmethodical *śravaṇa*, because such hearing does not enable one to realize the relationship between the various *līlās*, and thus, *rasa* does not awaken in his heart.

Vijaya: Please explain about systematic hearing (*krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*).

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: *Rasa* only awakens in one's heart when *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is heard methodically or in a regular order with resolute intelligence. When one hears the *aṣṭa-kāliya-nitya-līlā* (eternal eightfold daily pastimes) separately from the *naimittika-līlās* (occasional *līlās* such as Kṛṣṇa's divine birth and so on), then his *śravaṇa* is *krama-śuddha*. Only this *krama-śuddha śravaṇa* is desirable on the path of *bhajana*.

If one hears *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in the *krama-śuddha* manner, the sweetness and charm of the *līlā* is gradually conceived, and the inclination to perform *rāgānuga-bhajana* appears in the heart of the listener. At that time he thinks within himself, “Aho! Subala has such a wonderful *sakhya-bhāva* for Kṛṣṇa. I will also render loving *sevā* to Kṛṣṇa like him in *sakhya-rasa*.”

This type of strong affinity is called *lobha* (greed). The performance of *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* with such *lobha*, following the sweet *bhāvas* of the *vraja-vāsīs*, is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*. I have given the example of *sakhya-rasa*, but this type of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is also performed in all the four *rasas*, beginning with *dāsyā*. JD, Chapter 40, Pages 854-855

The primary and underlying implication of these insights and instructions is that one must undergo an internal transformation of heart to develop this level of attraction and accompanying intense desires. There is no question of pretending either, since that can never be sustained. If these desires are awakening and they continue to grow, being nurtured as recommended, then they should be considered genuine. One who has obtained such mercy should consider themselves extremely fortunate and eagerly pursue those desires.

These internal transformations cannot be accomplished by mechanically performing *vaidhī-bhakti* with a fearful, strict, rule-based mentality. These goals are never attained just by following rules and regulations alone. *Bhakti* is not a mechanical path based on quantitative metrics. Those guidelines are a means to an end. One must progress beyond that inflexible mindset to a more natural and spontaneous state of mind as indicated in the references above.

To be very clear, that does not imply being lax or loose with one's practices and standards either. It refers to the underlying motivations and focus impelling one's practices, and in fact it means that one will become even more serious and determined to go deeper into their *sādhana* and internal *bhajana*. In addition, one's external services to help others will also be enhanced significantly.

Sincerity is essential but one also needs the requisite seriousness, eagerness and focus to make significant progress, otherwise nostalgic sentimentalism and stagnation will prevail, curtailing one's forward momentum. In *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes about these personal challenges and the impediments they create.

On the path of gradual development, care must be taken to become steadily elevated to a higher level, no matter what the present level. By good fortune, the tendency of the soul is to elevate itself gradually, but there are certainly obstacles along the path, and so the soul may fail to reach the ultimate goal. Those who desire to reach a higher standard must always be conscious of this fact.

In progressing from one level of life to the next, two things should be considered. The aspirant should be firmly fixed in one position to take a firm step to the next higher level. Then in order to advance successfully to the higher level, when one foot gives up the previous place, that foot must firmly fix itself in the higher level before the other foot can follow on to that new level.

Simultaneously, the aspirant must give up attachment to the lower level, becoming firmly established on the higher level. By moving too quickly, the aspirant will fall. By moving too slowly the results will come slowly.

...Some people lament that they have not attained devotion to Kṛṣṇa but at the same time they do not make any real attempt to raise themselves to the level of Kṛṣṇa bhakti. They remain bound to one of the levels and do not attempt to progress to the practices of the next higher level. This is known as *niyamagraha*. If people stop at one stage, how can they expect to progress to the top?

Thus, many devotees on the level of *vaidhī-bhakti* make no attempt to progress to *bhāva-bhakti*, but then lament they have not attained *bhāva*. Again many people remain attached to the rules of *varnasrama* and are indifferent to *bhāva* and *prema*. This bondage to one level is an obstacle to their advancement. CS, 3.1

Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasized this same idea in a lecture on *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* in Vṛndāvana, 1972.

This is apprenticeship. *Vaidhī-bhakti*, that is apprenticeship. Real *bhakti*, *parā-bhakti*, that is *rāgānuga-bhakti*. This *rāgānuga-bhakti*, we have to come to after surpassing the *vaidhī-bhakti*.

In the material world, if we do not try to make further and further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the *śāstric* regulation process and do not try to go beyond that...

Śāstric process also regulation, that is required. Without *śāstric* process you cannot go to that platform. But if we stick to the *śāstric* process only and do not try to improve ourself... The *śāstric* process is *kaniṣṭhā-adhikāra*, the lowest stage of devotional service.

Chanting the Holy Names is certainly a foundational practice but if it is not nourished by regular study (*śravaṇam*) then the fruits will manifest slowly. The key to moving forward beyond one's current position is studying the books of the previous *ācāryas*, including the *līlā* books, for all the reasons we have seen so far. And of course, association with like-minded advanced devotees on the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Sādhana-bhakti is *bhakti* in practice, using the senses, mind and intelligence. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī lists the sixty-four most well known limbs – *aṅgas* – or types of activities that constitute *sādhana-bhakti*, and which have been classified as being directly part of *bhakti* in practice. Of the first twenty items listed by Śrī Rūpa (BRS, 1.2.72-82), the first three are said to be the most important.

These twenty *aṅgas* serve as the door for entering *bhakti*. The first three *aṅgas* are said to be the principal ones.

- (1) taking shelter of the feet of a *guru*.
- (2) receiving teachings from the *guru* after initiation.
- (3) serving the *guru* with respect. BRS, 1.2.83

Śrī Rūpa then lists the remaining forty-four items (BRS, 1.2.84-92), but the last five he says are the most important.

The last five items were mentioned previously. They have been mentioned again to point out their superiority among all *aṅgas*. BRS, 1.2.93

The last five *aṅgas* are:

- (1) Having faith and great affection for serving the Deity.
- (2) Relishing *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* in the association of devotees.
- (3) Associating with like-minded, affectionate, superior devotees.
- (4) *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*.
- (5) Living in the area of Mathurā/Vṛndāvana (or living there within one's mind – *mānasī-vraja*).

Further on, Rūpa Gosvāmī reveals more amazing things about these particular five items.

The last five items (from BRS, 1.2.90-92) have inconceivable and astonishing power. What to speak of having faith in these items, if there is just a little relationship with

these items, persons who are devoid of offenses can attain the level of *bhāva*. BRS, 1.2.238

Śrī Rūpa then presents five verses to further emphasize the potency of each of these five items. He follows those explanations with this verse as the final powerful conclusion.

The inconceivable power of these extraordinary five *aṅgas* is such that it will manifest the state of *bhāva* and its object, Kṛṣṇa, at the same time. BRS, 1.2.244

Rūpa Gosvāmī's repetition of the importance of these five *aṅgas* should be taken as a very important recommendation for aspiring *sādhakas*.

Now we'll review some considerations regarding choosing a *nitya-siddha vraja-vāsī* to follow. Although it has been said that one can have any type of relationship with Kṛṣṇa they desire, for those who are eager to enter *vraja-līlā* in Goloka Vṛndāvana there are very defined parameters regarding the types of relationships one can aspire for. In other words, we must fit into what has existed for eternity, and seamlessly blend in with all the other *vraja-vāsīs*. That is accomplished by following (*anuga*) the *rāga* of a *vraja-vāsī*.

Because of their potency, regular reading of Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* will eventually result in one becoming attracted to a particular type of relationship, as exemplified by a *vraja-vāsī* one has read about, and whose mood and personality attracts one's heart and mind. Thus, one has an archetype so to speak, whom one can follow to refine one's own unique aspirations in that same particular mood.

Following a *vraja-vāsī* is not ritualistic, symbolic, or temporary either, as one must develop the same level of affection for that *vraja-vāsī* as one has for Kṛṣṇa. In fact, one will be part of the sub-group of the *vraja-vāsī* one is following, and that relationship is also eternal. In his commentary in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Viśvanātha Cakravartī explains this.

It has previously been explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that attaining the position of a *gopī* cannot take place without *rāgānuga-bhakti*. And without following after the *nitya-siddha gopīs*, *rāgānuga* cannot be perfected. *Rāgānuga* means to follow after those *gopīs* who have *rāga*. Those three types who follow the *nitya-siddhas* attain perfection like the *nitya-siddha gopīs* but they exist externally in a slightly lesser position than the *nitya-siddha gopīs* that they follow.

...According to the principles of *rāgānuga-bhakti* a person should follow a desired *gopī* while having affection for her not less than one's affection for Kṛṣṇa. If one follows a *gopī* while having less affection for her than for Kṛṣṇa, it would not be much different from *vaidhī-bhakti*. Even *vaidhī-bhakti* cannot be perfected without following devotees. UN, 8.137 Commentary

Having summarized the key elements of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, the following is an outline of the progressive stages one must traverse. In *Jaiva-dharma* and *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes the development of one's spiritual identity as having five distinct stages.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura explains these five stages to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Harināmā-cintāmaṇi*. These stages apply to the development of any desired *rasa*, not just those aspiring to be *gopīs*.

Five stages in the cultivation of the *gopī* identity.

The complete realization of these eleven aspects of identity (*ekādaśa-bhāvas*) develops through five stages experienced in the life of the practitioner. These five stages are the following: hearing, acceptance, remembering, attainment, full possession.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Notes:

As one progresses in the cultivation of one's spiritual identity, five stages are progressively crossed. These are:

- (1) the stage of hearing – *śravaṇa-daśā*
- (2) the stage of accepting – *varaṇa-daśā*
- (3) the stage of remembering – *smaraṇa-daśā*
- (4) the stage of adoption – *āpana-daśā*
- (5) the stage of full possession – *sampatti-daśā*

One who has a strong desire to taste the nectar of the *gopīs*' loving mood, abandons all consideration of the religious principles of the Vedas. He cares not for public opinion, but simply worships Kṛṣṇa. Whoever worships Kṛṣṇa in any one of the moods of the residents of Vraja will attain a suitable spiritual body to serve Him there. CC, 2.8.220, 222

With these words, Rāmānanda Rāya taught that any practitioner who wishes to cultivate the *ujjvala-rasa* absolutely must take a *gopī* body. When one hears these pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and becomes attracted to this particular mood, one must approach a genuine spiritual master to learn these eleven aspects of his spiritual identity (*ekādaśa-bhāvas*).

Hearing the spiritual master delineate this identity in theory is called *śravaṇa-daśā*, the stage of hearing.

When the disciple eagerly accepts this identification, that is called *varaṇa-daśā*, the stage of accepting.

When he cultivates this mood and identity by meditating on *rasa* in all its aspects, then he is situated in *smaraṇa-daśā*, the stage of remembering.

When he has fully assimilated that identity, which has now been made fully clear, he has reached the state called *āpana-daśā* or *prāpti-daśā*, the stage of attainment.

Finally, when he becomes entirely separated from this earthly existence and becomes eternally fixed in his longed-for spiritual form, he has attained *sampatti-daśā*, the stage of full possession. HC, 15.59-60

In conjunction with stage three, *smaraṇa-daśā*, Jīva Gosvāmī describes four progressive steps in *Bhakti Sandarbha*, specific to contemplating Kṛṣṇa, and then he explains the five progressive stages of remembrance.

Just as we have discussed that hearing and singing generally proceed in a certain order – from the Lord’s names, to His forms, attributes and finally His pastimes – remembrance of the Lord should also be taken up in order, which facilitates each successive stage in the progression. Thus, after remembrance of the Lord’s name and form, one should remember His attributes, associates, service, and pastimes.

There are five stages in the evolution of remembrance:

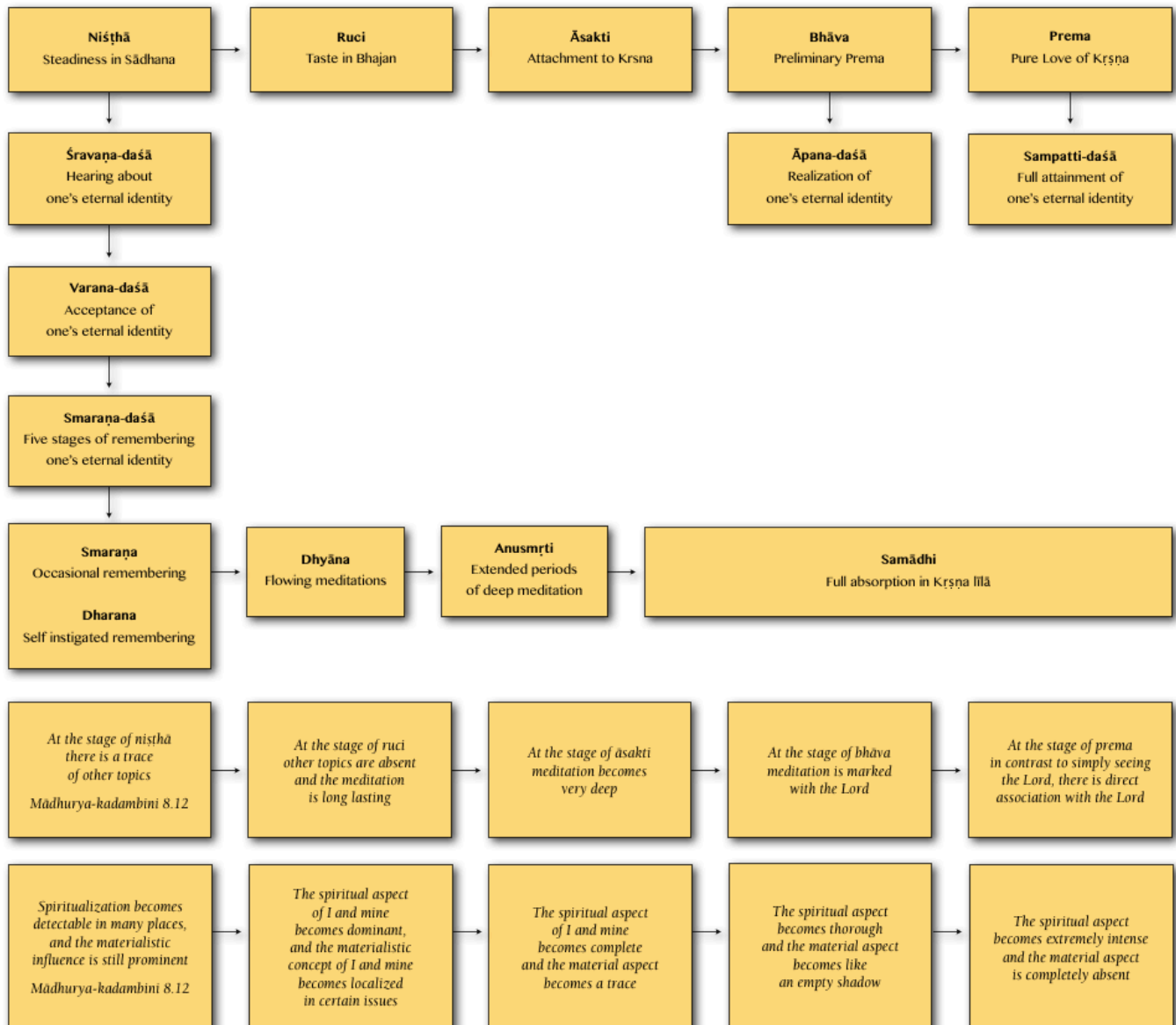
- 1) To think of the Lord in whatever manner and to whatever extent is known as *smaraṇam*, or remembrance.
- 2) To withdraw the mind from all external objects and fix it in a general way on the Lord is called *dhāraṇa*, or concentration.
- 3) To specifically contemplate the Lord’s name, form and other attributes is called *dhyāna*, or meditation.
- 4) When remembrance proceeds without interruption like a continuous flow of nectar, it is called *dhruvānusmṛti*, or constant remembrance.
- 5) When the object of one’s meditation alone is manifest, without awareness even of one’s own (physical) self, it is called *samādhi*, or trance. BhS, *Anuccheda* 278

On the next page is a chart from my first book about *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which shows the correlation between these five stages and the final stages of *bhakti*, i.e., *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āśakti*, *bhāva*, and *prema*, as well as the five stages of remembering. Also included are related references from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Mādhurya-kaḍambinī*.

The final five stages of rāgānugā-bhakti

The five stages of progressive realization of one's siddha-deha

The five stages of remembering



Guru and Sādhū-saṅga – Association is a Primary Factor

‘sādhū-saṅga’, ‘sādhū-saṅga’ – sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhū-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya

The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment’s association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success. CC, 2.22.54

Besides reading the *līlā* books, one must earnestly request Kṛṣṇa to arrange for association with like-minded advanced devotees who are on the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, as that is a parallel and essential factor to solidify and accelerate one’s progress. Kṛṣṇa will surely fulfill such ardent desires. *Sādhū-saṅga* is the basis for many powerful *samskāras* which span lifetimes of spiritual development. We’ve seen that point emphasized repeatedly by the *ācāryas*.

There are countless references from many texts which emphasize this indispensable factor of *sādhū-saṅga*. Far too many to list here. Since one of the main source books for this treatise is the *Brahma-sūtras*, we will examine some insightful and relevant references from Chapter 3, Section 3, discussing the necessity of having the association of a qualified *guru*, for both instructions and mercy. And the same principle applies to the association of advanced devotees.

Topic 22 – Mercy of guru

Now starts the topic of the Lord's quality of being attained through a *guru*. This is stated in scriptures dealing with *vidyā*.

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah

The meaning of scriptures is revealed to the great souls whose *bhakti* to the Lord is equaled by *bhakti* to *guru*. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23

Similarly it is said *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*: one who accepts *guru* knows the Vedas. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.14.2)

tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet: to gain knowledge of the Lord, one must approach a *guru*. (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12)

The doubt is this. Does one gain the result from hearing through the *guru* or hearing, along with the mercy of the *guru*?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It comes from hearing since the scriptures say that the result comes from hearing. What is the use of mercy?

It is stated in scriptures that mercy of *guru* is necessary to attain the goal, just as his mercy is necessary to get the means to the goal. BS, 3.3.44

Just as the cause of attaining Brahman is the *sādhana* of hearing, given by the pleased *guru*, so also the result, attainment of Brahman, is achieved by the pleased *guru*. It is not just by hearing. Mercy is necessary.

Mercy of the *guru* directed to the disciple is stated in scriptures. The word *pra* indicates mercy. Thus *pradānavat* means, "as in the case of mercifully giving *sādhana*". The Lord Himself says *ācāryopasanam*: knowledge means approaching a *guru*. (BG, 13.8) One attains the goal by hearing along with mercy of the *guru*.

Topic 23 – Mercy is stronger than effort

Which is the stronger influence for attaining the goal, one's efforts or the grace of *guru*?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) One's efforts are a stronger influence because without effort, grace becomes insignificant.

Because of indications in scriptures, mercy of *guru* is stronger. But hearing and other actions are also necessary. BS, 3.3.45

Having heard about Brahman from *devatās* who had assumed forms of a bull, fire, swan and bird, Satyakāma then requested his *guru*, *bhagavāms tv eva me kāmam brūyāt*: O great respected *guru*, please speak this knowledge to me if you desire. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4.9.2) Similarly Upakośala who heard the knowledge from Agni then asked his teacher for the same knowledge.

Because of many indications concerning the mercy of *guru* seen in the *Chāndogya* and other *Upaniṣads*, mercy of *guru* is stronger. But one should not think, "That mercy is enough. Effort is not necessary." Hearing and other actions are necessary.

Yasya deve parā bhaktiḥ: the person who has *bhakti* to the Lord has all the meanings of scripture revealed. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

It is also said *śrotavyaḥ mantavyaḥ*: one should hear and contemplate. (*Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.5)

Smṛti says: Mercy of *guru* is strong. There is nothing stronger than this. However hearing and other actions must be performed to attain liberation.

Take note that an example of the mercy of the *guru* was explained thus: "as in the case of *mercifully giving sādhana*". This means mercy is also given in practical terms, i.e., teaching the philosophy, instructions for performing *sādhana*, on-going guidance, etc. These are the acts of

mercy manifest by *gurus*, and Kṛṣṇa's mercy follows if one accepts that mercy and engages accordingly, as explained.

Topic 26 – Insistence on worship of devotees

Now the quality of the Lord of being attained with the help of devotees is gathered. It is said *atithi devo bhāva*: let the guest be treated as the Lord. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1.11.2)

The doubt is this. Does worship of the devotee produce liberation?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) Liberation is possible by worship of the Lord along with the mercy of *guru*. What is the use of devotees?

Devotees are also necessary for liberation because the scriptures insist on it. BS, 3.3.51

Anubandha means insisting on worship of great souls. *Atithi-devo bhāva* means he should be worshipped like the Lord. Therefore by his mercy one attains liberation. Otherwise the statement would not be made.

Smṛti also says the same: Without bathing in the dust from the feet of great devotees, one cannot realize the Lord through concentration of the mind, performance of sacrifices, distributing food, building shelters for the destitute, studying the Vedas, or performing austerities in the water, fire or the sun. SB, 5.12.12

The Lord himself says: O Uddhava! Only by associating with My pure devotees one can destroy material attachment and attain Me. One cannot attain Me by *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, distinction of *ātmā* from body, practice of nonviolence, study of the Vedas, austerity, *sannyāsa*, sacrifices, charitable projects, donations, vows, worship of *devatās*, secret *mantras*, holy places, or observing prohibitions and rules. SB, 11.12.1-2

Personally instructing about Himself, the Lord orders association with devotees. He reveals that this association is the secret of *sādhana*. The word *ādibhyaḥ* in the *sūtra* indicates that serving the *tīrthas* of the Lord and giving up criticism of persons other than the Lord is included.

O *brāhmaṇas*! Attraction for topics concerning Kṛṣṇa will arise by service to the great devotees and *tīrthas*, followed by faith, by surrender to the feet of the pure *guru*, and by the desire to hear. SB, 1.2.16

... "Since *guru* and devotee association is caused by the Lord, the Lord's mercy is the cause of liberation. Good *karma* is not the cause of association with devotees or *guru*, since that also is caused by the Lord. The Lord is the cause of all actions as stated in *sūtra* 2.3.4. Therefore it is not proper to imagine that the mercy of *guru* or devotees is the cause of liberation."

Even though it is admitted that the mercy of guru and devotees is caused by the Lord, still that mercy is given to the guru and devotees to distribute. Therefore they are independent in giving mercy. When the devotees and guru give mercy to a person, the Lord follows and gives mercy to him. All statements have been reconciled and irregularities removed.

We read about the *circle of love* between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and this last paragraph describes the *circle of mercy*. It should be clear from these statements that the importance of advanced *sādhū-saṅga* cannot be overemphasized. It is essential mercy for one's progress. Association has various aspects, but by far the most important one is *kṛṣṇa-kāṭha*, i.e., discussing the philosophy, the *līlās*, and the process with advanced devotees, and receiving personal guidance from them. In the next section we'll examine how that association influences one's desires and inclinations.

How is the Jīva's Relationship With Kṛṣṇa In Vraja-līlā Developed?

Before we examine how one's eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa develops, first, there is a very important point to understand. Prior to cultivating spiritual desires for an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in His realm, one must first develop a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the context of one's material identity and *karmic* circumstances.

That personal connection must be well established for one to move forward in the development of a relationship in the context of *vraja-līlā*. In other words, if you want to be part of Kṛṣṇa's *līlās* in the spiritual world then you must first invite Kṛṣṇa to be an integral part of your material life to help you in every way. He's already with us as Paramātmā so it's just a question of turning to Him to acknowledge His constant presence and willingness to facilitate our endeavors.

The internal transformations that one undergoes on the path of *bhakti* are gradual and incremental, and throughout that process Kṛṣṇa not only guides us internally to attain our desired goals, He is also our “chariot driver” helping us navigate through the battles we encounter in our personal life imposed by our remaining *karmic* obligations – *prārabdha-karma*.

One of the nine core *aṅgas* of *sādhana-bhakti* found in the famous verse by Prahlāda Mahārāja is *sakhyam*, which means “friendship”. That is not referring specifically to the *sakhya-rasa* of the cowherd boys. It means understanding and relating to Kṛṣṇa in your heart primarily as your best friend, and as God, secondarily.

In other words, an appropriate mindset would be: Kṛṣṇa is my best friend, and He happens to be God. As opposed to: Kṛṣṇa is God, and He happens to be my best friend. It's a subtle but very important distinction. Kṛṣṇa clearly prefers the former mentality.

Here is Śrī Prahlāda's statement from *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*:

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him. SB, 7.5.23

From Śrīla Prabhupāda's Purport:

One should have complete faith in the words of Kṛṣṇa, Who says that He is the great well-wishing friend of everyone (*suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*). A devotee considers Kṛṣṇa the only friend. This is called *sakhyam*.

Although this *sakhyam* is an *aṅga* of *sādhana-bhakti*, it is also considered to be an advanced level of practice, most often associated with *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Here are some references from the Chapter on *Sādhana-bhakti* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explaining this *aṅga*.

Friendship (verse 87): There are two types of *sakhyam*: trust and being friendly. BRS, 1.2.188

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

The first type is the opinion of others, and the second is the opinion of the author (Rūpa Gosvāmī). *Mitra* here means friendship in general (rather than the *sakhya-sthāyi-bhāva* that appears only in *bhāva* and *prema*).

The second type of friendship is illustrated in the *Agastya-saṁhitā*: A person who is dedicated to serving the Lord, and out of friendship sees and treats Him as a human, lies down in the Lord's temple.

The last example should be classed as *rāgānuga-sādhana*, because of disregard for *vaidhī-sādhana*. However, attraction for feelings of friendship is cultivated in both *rāgānuga-sādhana* and *vaidhī-sādhana*. BRS, 1.2.192-193

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Even though verse 192 is certainly classed as an *aṅga* of *rāgānuga*, which will be discussed later, the verse is quoted to show that there are examples of *sakhya* within *vaidhī-bhakti*, which follow after the mood of *rāgānuga* (predominantly *vaidhī-bhakti*, with a tinge of informality). *Sakhya-rati* here means attraction for the mood of friendship (rather than the *sakhya-rati* in relation to Kṛṣṇa developed from *rāgānuga-bhakti*.)

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

The *sakhya* in the form of friendliness (*mitra*) should be classed as *rāgānuga*. Though all the previous *aṅgas* can also be performed as *rāgānuga* by disregarding the emphasis on rules, it should be understood that the *mitra* aspect of *sakhya* reveals mainly the path of *rāga*. However, on both paths, *vaidhī* and *rāgānuga*, feelings of friendliness arising as part of *sādhana* can produce *sakhya-rati*.

Friendship and offering the self and body are rare because of the difficulty of execution during the state of *sādhana*. However, some wise men have considered that these two qualify as part of *sādhana*. BRS, 1.2.198

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Ātma-nivedanam in its pure form is rare because of the difficulty in execution, not because of having an elevated status, since it may be executed even without *bhāva*. *Sakhya* is rare because of the difficulty in execution and its extremely elevated status, since *sakhya* in its pure form possesses the most elevated *bhāva*. However, if *ātma-nivedanam* becomes mixed with emotional relationships, it will become rare because of its elevated status as well.

Thinking of Kṛṣṇa as your best friend and relating to Him in that informal mood is the prelude to the development of the *vraja-līlā* mindset, which is far more attractive to Kṛṣṇa. Also, to enter *vraja-līlā* one cannot maintain a mood of *aiśvarya-bhāva*, i.e., thinking of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That would spoil the *rasa* there. Even Kṛṣṇa forgets He is God in those pastimes. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this very clearly in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Unless one follows in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, he cannot attain the service of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. If one is overcome by knowledge of the Lord's opulence, he cannot attain the Lord's lotus feet, even though he is engaged in devotional service. CC, 2.8.230

Purport by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

One can worship Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa by the process of *vidhi-mārga*, worshiping the Lord with regulative principles according to the instructions of the *śāstra* and the spiritual master. But the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, cannot be directly worshiped by this process. The dealings between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* are devoid of the opulences of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa.

The process of *vidhi-mārga*, following the regulative principles, is utilized in the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, whereas the process of spontaneous service (*rāga-mārga*) – following in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, who are the denizens of Vṛndāvana – is transcendently more advanced and is the process whereby Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are worshiped.

One cannot attain this elevated position while worshiping the Lord in His opulence. Those attracted by the conjugal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa must follow in the footsteps of the gopīs. Only then is it possible to enter into the Lord's service in Goloka Vṛndāvana and directly associate with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

In this intimate friendship, Kṛṣṇa guides us in all affairs of life, not just spiritual. In the *Brahma-sūtras* it is explained that Kṛṣṇa takes care of His devotee's material needs.

It has been stated that the *nirapekṣa* devotee has no attraction for the happiness of any material place including *Brahma-loka*. Now it is stated that these devotees have no attraction to the happiness of the present world.

...The doubt is this. Does the *nirapekṣa* maintain his present body by his own endeavors or by the endeavor of the Lord?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) They maintain themselves by their own efforts since they do not want to make the Lord put forth efforts on their behalf.

Their bodies are maintained by the Lord since the Śruti states this. This is the opinion of Dattātreya. BS, 3.4.44

Their bodies are maintained by the Lord. Why? Because Śruti states that the Lord maintains them. This is the opinion of Dattātreya.

But I carry the burden of supply and maintenance of those who desire constant association with Me, and who, thinking only of Me, worship only Me. BG, 9.22

The fish nourishes its offspring by seeing, the turtle by meditation, and the birds by touch. I nourish My devotees with similar affection, O Brahmā. *Padma Purāṇa*

From these statements it is understood that thinking that the devotee should not engage the Lord in supporting him is a material conception, since the devotee never desires maintenance and the Lord does not make endeavor, since everything is accomplished by His will. Simply by serving the Lord, their bodily maintenance is achieved. Thus the passage quoted says the Lord is simply served by the devotees.

The Lord's devotion to maintaining His devotees is illustrated with an example to make it clear.

Therefore, developing our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa actually begins by first establishing a loving friendship with Him as an integral part of our endeavor to develop a relationship with Him internally in the context of *vraja-līlā*. In doing so, Kṛṣṇa takes personal interest and becomes directly involved in our lives in every way, as we just read.

Traversing the spiritual path of *bhakti* inextricably involves dealing with our *karmic* challenges along the way, and those tribulations are mitigated to varying degrees by Kṛṣṇa's

personal involvement. Integrating Kṛṣṇa in our lives means discussing all matters with Him internally, which is different from praying (*vandanam*) because it's not formal.

It's a personal and intimate on-going dialogue in a mood of informal loving friendship, knowing that Kṛṣṇa is there with you at every moment, focused on you alone because your *bhakti* and *prīti* attracts Him, according to its intensity and quality. Being regularly and consciously engaged internally with Kṛṣṇa like that during the ebb and flow continuum of our daily life is a powerful and necessary foundation for our spiritual progress. It is an essential aspect of being "Kṛṣṇa conscious" throughout the stages of one's progress.

This is also different from sporadically remembering things related to Kṛṣṇa throughout the day. This means being conscious of His direct presence because there is an ongoing interactive communication taking place. That consciousness becomes seamlessly integrated into one's spiritual practices. And Kṛṣṇa reciprocates in those exchanges as He explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Upon those who perform *bhajana* to Me with love, yearning for My eternal association, I bestow the transcendental knowledge by which they can come to Me. BG, 10.10

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī:

So, they attain satisfaction and bliss. According to Your statement, Your *bhaktas* attain supreme bliss only by performing *bhakti* to You. It is therefore clear that they are beyond the *guṇas*. But how do they get direct realization of You and from whom do they learn the process to achieve it?

Anticipating this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this *śloka* beginning with the word *teṣāṃ*. I Myself inspire all of the natural tendencies within the hearts of those who desire My eternal association so that they achieve this. This *buddhi-yoga* cannot be achieved by individual effort or obtained from someone. It is bestowed by Me alone and only such loving *bhaktas* are qualified to receive it. After being blessed with this *buddhi-yoga*, they achieve Me.

Only out of compassion for these *ananya-bhaktas* do I, dwelling within the core of their hearts, destroy, with the blazing lamp of transcendental knowledge, the darkness of *samsāra*, born of ignorance. BG, 10.11

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī:

Arjuna may ask, Surely, You cannot be achieved by a person who has not acquired real knowledge. That is why one will endeavor for *vidyā*. In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, No, No. I am explaining how I bless only My *ananya-bhaktas*, not *yogīs* or others. I Myself am always enthusiastic to give My mercy to them so they need not undergo any anxiety to achieve it.

Entering the core of their intelligence, I dispel the darkness of their hearts with the lamp of knowledge. That *jñāna* which enlightens one about Me is not *sāttvika*; it is *nirguṇa*. And because this *jñāna* is born from *bhakti*, it is special, even within the category of *nirguṇa-jñāna*. Only with the lamp of this particular *jñāna* do I destroy the darkness in their hearts. Therefore, why should they endeavor for this?

For those who are exclusively devoted to Me, I carry their maintenance and their requirements. In accordance with this statement of *Gītā* (9.22), Śrī Bhagavān accepts the burden of satisfying all of the material and spiritual needs of his *ananya-bhaktas*.

Establishing a relationship of friendship with Kṛṣṇa is thus a key preliminary step in one's endeavor towards developing an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. Now we will examine how that relationship evolves in one's life, and the key factors that influence its manifestation.

Lord Caitanya explained to Rūpa Gosvāmī that a *jīva* wanders throughout the universe for millions of births until it is fortunate to get the seed of *bhakti* (*bhakti-latā-bija*) by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and *guru* (CC, 2.19.151). Thus, the *jīva*'s spiritual journey begins with association – *sādhū-saṅga*. Kṛṣṇa personally arranges those connections according to the *jīva*'s evolving desires and accumulated *sukṛti*. That *sādhū-saṅga*, along with the *sādhana*s and worship they teach, influences and focuses the *jīva*'s inclinations and aspirations.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu explained that the *jīva* is constitutionally an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa but He did not teach that *bhakti* is therefore inherent in the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*. He taught that the seed of *bhakti* must be obtained from a devotee who possesses *bhakti*. It is understood that giving *bhakti* is a gift of their causeless mercy. One must then take personal responsibility and become an expert gardener to cultivate, nourish, and protect the unique *bhakti* creeper that grows in their heart from that seed.

That received seed of *bhakti* awakens or activates the *jīva*'s dormant inherent constitutional function as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, and realigns the *jīva* towards Kṛṣṇa through service with a favorable mood of devotion. That can only happen in the association of devotees who possess genuine *bhakti*.

The *pūrva ācāryas*, the architects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy, who were instructed directly by Lord Caitanya, teach that each *jīva* develops their desired relationship with Kṛṣṇa as a direct consequence of the influence of association with devotees of the various forms of Kṛṣṇa, with their different devotional moods, along with the *sādhana*s that are learned from such association. And this is a gradual process that develops and matures over the course of many lifetimes.

Thus, there are three primary and integral factors in the development of the *jīva's* personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His *līlās*:

The *jīva's* desires

Association with advanced devotees

Kṛṣṇa's will

Kṛṣṇa's will doesn't override the *jīva's* limited free will in these interactions. Because the *jīva's* desires are focused on Him, Kṛṣṇa becomes personally involved and guides the *jīva* in the fulfillment of those desires. As we discussed at the beginning of this section, it is in fact, the first phase of the *jīva* developing a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa – in the context of the *jīva's* temporary material identity, but in pursuance of an eternal spiritual identity to facilitate a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*.

Ultimately, it is the *jīva* who decides what type of relationship they want to have with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*. That decision is made based on the cumulative effect of the many influences (*saṃskāras*) the *jīva* has experienced through their *sādhana* and *sādhū-saṅga*. The principle, “according to one's choice” is ubiquitous in *śāstra* and the writings of the previous *ācāryas*, and I have highlighted that in the references throughout this book for emphasis.

However, some Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineages insist that the *guru* “gives” the disciple their eternal relationship and identity along with the related aspects, as in the case of *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā* and the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*. I discussed *siddha-praṇālī* at length in my first book, so I'm only going to highlight details that are relevant to the focus of this treatise.

Lalitā Prasāda Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's youngest son, received *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā* from his father, in his lineage (*parivār*) of Bipin Bihārī Gosvāmī. One of my godbrothers received *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā* from Lalitā Prasāda Ṭhākura, after Śrīla Prabhupāda's passing, so I asked him if Lalitā Prasāda imposed his own preferences regarding the disciple's *siddha-deha* identity, i.e., the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*. Or did he inquire from each disciple about their inclinations and help them develop the *ekādaśa-bhāvas* of their *siddha-deha* according to their preferences?

My godbrother said Lalitā Prasāda definitely applied the latter approach. There was never any imposition by him. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura confirmed using the same approach in *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*, Chapter 15. All that being said, I am not advocating or validating *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā*, nor have the *purva ācāryas* taught in their books that *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā* is part of the process of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

The first discussion of the *ekādaśa-bhāvas* that I've found is in *Gaura-govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati*, compiled by Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī under the guidance of his *guru*, Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī, a contemporary of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. But there is no discussion in any of the Gosvāmī's major or even secondary books that the *guru* is the one who decides what the disciple's eternal relationship and identity will be.

When asked for evidence to support *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā*, followers of those lineages generally provide only one short reference from *Prema Vilāsa*, a book by Śrīla Nityānanda Dāsa, where

Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī gives *dīkṣā* to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and tells him his name is Mani Mañjarī, and that he is in Guṇa Mañjarī's (Gopāla Bhaṭṭa) group.

Be that as it may, that one reference is hardly sufficient evidence (*pramāṇa*) to support that the *guru* gives their disciples their spiritual identities. Especially in light of all the evidence we have examined so far, as well as what we will learn in the following Section, *How Does The Jīva's Eternal Identity Manifest?*

The *guru*'s role is to teach and guide the disciple. No *guru* knows the eternal spiritual identities of their disciples because those identities are not pre-existing. None of the *purva ācāryas* teach that. Neither is it stated in *śāstra*. *Gurus* cannot know that which is yet to be developed by one's evolving personal desires. And it's not the *guru*'s prerogative to impose their arbitrary preferences on disciples regarding such personal and intimate matters.

All of the *ācāryas* have indicated that the *guru*'s influence specifically relates to the type of relationship (*rasa*) one desires, including its associated *bhāvas* and *prīti*. They never teach that the *guru* determines one's spiritual identity. The *guru* assists the disciple in developing their identity according to the disciple's preferences, using the framework of the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*.

It is understood that one should seek out the association of devotees whose aspirations are similar to one's own. In that association one's desires will become stronger, refined, and more focused, as would be expected. So it is always and only a matter of influence and assimilation rather than imposition.

We learned from the *Brahma-sūtras* in the Section on *Mukti* that one of the astonishing attributes intrinsic to the *jīva's svarūpa* is *satya-kāma*, i.e., all desires are instantly fulfilled. In fact, we learned from Śrī Madhvācārya, that for those qualified and on the threshold of liberation, one's desires are already considered fulfilled – just not yet manifest until the person attains *mukti* or *bhāva-bhakti*.

Consider this crucially important point. Desiring to attain a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa is a *jīva's* highest and most pure expression of their endless desires, and as such, those desires for a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa will most certainly be fulfilled, because Kṛṣṇa promises, *ye yathā mām prapadyante*. And Goloka Vṛndāvana is the realm where *all* one's desires are fulfilled. Even the trees there fulfill everyone's desires, what to speak of Kṛṣṇa!

Thus, the idea that one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa is predetermined and one has no choice in the matter is completely antithetical to everything we've examined from *śāstra* and the *ācāryas*. And it completely conflicts with the liberated *jīva's* inherent attribute of *satya-kāma*. How can a *jīvan-mukta* have all desires fulfilled instantly except the most important desire they've ever had? It makes no sense, and it is not supported by *guru*, *sādhū*, or *śāstra*.

Love is always a personal choice and it must be given freely, willingly, and spontaneously or it is not genuine love. Kṛṣṇa responds to authentic expressions of love and affection (*prīti*) imbued in the *jīva's bhakti*, and that is what attracts Him most powerfully.

In fact, *bhakti* can even control Kṛṣṇa. As such, each *jīva* has the eligibility and potential to develop and attain any one of the four main types of relationships with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*, or in any of His unlimited *līlās* – according to their personal inclinations and choice.

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Lord Caitanya teaches this to Sanātana Gosvāmī.

Kṛṣṇa has many types of devotees – some are servants, some are friends, some are parents, and some are conjugal lovers. Devotees who are situated in one of these attitudes of spontaneous love “according to their choice” are considered to be on the path of spontaneous loving service (*rāga-mārga*). CC, 2.22.161

Some devotees try to over simplify things by saying, “Kṛṣṇa knows everything about the future, therefore, the *jīva*’s relationship is predetermined, since Kṛṣṇa knows what it will be.” Of course that is an invalid argument because Kṛṣṇa’s knowing does not imply nor prove that He interferes with the *jīva*’s desires or choices – He “facilitates” them according to the principle, *ye yathā mām prapadyante*.

Here are two references from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explaining clearly that one’s attraction to a particular type of relationship (*rati*) with Kṛṣṇa evolves over the course of many lifetimes of *saṁskāras* obtained through *sādhana* and *sādhya-saṅga*. The implication is that until one becomes focused on desiring one particular type of relationship, one is not yet qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

The taste for *bhakti-rasa* arises in the heart of a person who has had experiences of pure *bhakti* in the present and previous lives. BRS, 2.1.6

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Even though there are impressions in this life for giving rise to *rasa* from the presence of *rati* in this life, it is necessary to seek out impressions from previous lives as well, to explain the occurrence of *rasa*.

This distinction between past life experiences of *rati* and present life experiences of *rati* applies to those persons subject to disappearance (and not the *nitya-siddhas*). This is the rule for most cases discussed in the book. The import is that *rati* has to be intense for *bhakti-rasa* to appear.

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī:

Though there are recent impressions for giving rise to *rati*, past life impressions are also needed to give a taste of *rati*. Though in this life *rati* appears in persons who have surrendered to *guru*, performed *bhakti*, and destroyed all offenses, the taste for *rati* arises from experiences and actions in previous lives.

These five types of *rati* [the *rati* associated with each of the five *rasas*] progressively become more blissful by increasing tastes. The particular taste arises in a devotee according to his previous experiences. BRS, 2.5.38

Jīva Gosvāmī's Commentary:

After the five types of *rati* (*śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā*, *mādhuryā*) have been described, a doubt arises. Should all these types be considered equal or successively superior? If they are equal, then all the *ratīs* should have the same inclinations. If they are successively superior, what is the cause for differing inclinations in people for different *ratīs*? This verse answers. Increasing from first to last, from *śuddha-rati* (*śānta-rasa*) to *priyatā-rati* (*mādhuryā-rasa*), they become progressively filled with taste or delight.

But what determines who takes up which type of *rati*? Is it decided by having no impressions of a particular *rati* from previous lives, by having an impression of one type of *rati* from previous lives, or by having impressions of many types of *rati*?

In the first option – absence of impressions – *rati* cannot occur at all, because no taste could arise. In the case of persons having impressions of many types of *rati*, a particular *rati* could not manifest prominently because conflicting tastes would result in the improper manifestation of *rasa* (*rasābhāsa*). Therefore, impressions of only one type carried from previous lives produce the specific taste.

Though not being in a position to perceive the depth of that *rasa*, one can confirm its identity by comparing scriptural descriptions of *rasas* with one's own inclinations, and by inference through seeing how *rasas*, different from one's own *rasa*, either nourish or fail to nourish the total ingredients.

Take special note that in the last paragraph of Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary above, he indicates that one should be *proactively* exploring one's inclinations with the aim to develop a focus on one type of *rati*. This process is not passive – it is highly proactive and dynamic. And it is developed gradually.

Continuing...

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Among the various tastes such as sweet, sour, and bitter, a particular person has a particular liking because of previous impressions. Because of impressions from a past life of a particular *rasa*, such as *dāsyā*, in this life also, the person has that taste alone and not others, by the mercy of a great devotee with a similar taste. This is the case for the two types of *dāsyā* and the other three higher *rasas*.

To reiterate, the “taste” one acquires is a consequence of *influence*, not *imposition*, nor *predetermination*. If one's relationship is predetermined, why didn't Jīva Gosvāmī and

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura just say so in these commentaries? They would have said that it will simply be revealed during the course of one's *sādhana*. What would be the need for lifetimes of association and the resultant influences and impressions?

In *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī describes the two different paths devotees take according to their *adhikāra* and association. It is a very instructive and detailed look at the psychology of how association influences one's inclinations.

Anuccheda 202 – The Analytical Path

Thus by associating with devotees among the various types that have been described [in the previous *Anucchedas*] one may be endowed with *bhakti*, which will manifest either quickly or after a delay, and take a particular form according to the different degrees of these devotees' spiritual power, their compassion, and the individual character of their devotional mood towards Bhagavān. In the same way, *jñāna* or non-dual awareness manifests through the association of a *jñānī*, in accordance with his or her level of realization.

In this matter, though pure and unmotivated devotion is proclaimed as the *abhidheya*, or the means of attaining the Absolute, the association of Bhagavān's devotees is also the *abhidheya* because it is the cause of this *bhakti*. For this reason, the devotee's characteristics must also be given. Still, just to ascertain the subtle nuances of devotees and devotion, the definitions of both will be repeated in various ways.

First of all, by association with specific devotees, one develops a corresponding type of faith in Bhagavān and a relish for hearing about Him as He is understood in the corresponding tradition. This enables one to turn one's awareness to Him. By further association with specific devotees, one develops a relish (*ruci*) for the particular form of Bhagavān worshiped by those devotees, as well as for the particular path of worship they follow.

After this, if the hunger to know more appears, one hears from one or more of those devotees, accepting them as spiritual teachers. Hearing means to understand the meaning of the scriptures through study of the six criteria that reveal their import. After this, one personally engages in reflection by deliberating on the meaning of what he has heard in order to dispel doubts and misconceptions about the knowledge received.

He then develops faith that the particular feature of Bhagavān towards which he is attracted is present at all times and in all places, within all of Bhagavān's other manifestations. Then, along with the first attraction that was awakened in him towards one specific form of Bhagavān, this same faith swells up with a renewed conviction that this very Bhagavān is supremely competent to bestow upon him the attainment for which he aspires.

Although supreme power is possible only in one form of Bhagavān, not in all, yet, due to a lack of awareness of this one special form, a person may develop this type of conviction in some other form of Bhagavān.

The progression that has just been explained in regard to the development of faith in a particular form of Bhagavān applies equally towards the awakening of faith in a specific path of worship. Once one has acquired knowledge of the Absolute by thus deliberating on the import of scripture, it is necessary to realize the nature of the Absolute.

This is done by carrying out the various practices of that particular path of worship, and each of these acts must be performed as a profound meditation on the nature of the Supreme Reality. This [above description summarizes] the path followed by those who are predominantly analytical (*vicara-pradhāna mārga*).

The Path of Taste

Those who are guided by relish, however, are not dependent on this type of analytical approach. Rather, the path for them consists of associating with *sādhus*, cultivating the taste for hearing the pastimes of Bhagavān, awakening faith in Bhagavān and the path of worship, and then repeatedly hearing and immersing oneself in the various methods of worship. This has been pointed out already in statements such as this:

O learned ones, by visiting or dwelling in a holy place a person gets an opportunity to associate with great devotees and to render service to them. By such service a person awakens faith and an interest in hearing narrations about Bhagavān and thus develops a taste for such narrations. (SB, 1.2.16)

This path of devotion predominated by taste (*ruci-pradhāna mārga*) is also indicated in this verse:

By association with devotees, one gets an opportunity to hear discussions of My pastimes, which illustrate My prowess and act as a tonic for the ears and the heart. By listening to these pastimes, faith, attachment, and devotion to Bhagavān Hari quickly manifest one after another. (SB, 3.25.25)

For those who covet *bhakti* characterized by love, the path predominated by relish is superior – not the analytical path, which is for those in whom the taste for hearing has not sprouted.

That those who have acquired taste do not follow the analytical path is indicated by this statement of Prahāda:

O Bhagavān of great renown, the constituent qualities of material nature, the predominating deities who regulate these qualities, the gross cosmic manifestation and its various elements, the gods, human beings, mind, intellect, and so on, cannot understand

You because all of these have a beginning and end. Reflecting on this, the wise abandon the analytical study of the words of scripture.

O most worshipful Bhagavān, service to You consists of six activities: offering obeisance, reciting prayers, rendering personal service to You, worship, remembering Your lotus feet, and hearing Your pastimes. How can one obtain *bhakti* towards You, who are the goal of the highest order of sages, without performing these six types of service? SB, 7.9.49-50

The word *karma* in the second of these verses refers to rendering personal service to Bhagavān, and *karma-smṛtiḥ* means remembering Bhagavān's pastimes. The word *caranayoḥ*, "in relation to Bhagavān's feet," is connected to all six of these activities [i.e., offering obeisance to Bhagavān's feet, and so on], and it conveys the sense of devotion.

On both these paths – that predominated by taste, and that predominated by scriptural analysis – the person who was the śravaṇa guru, or the teacher from whom one begins hearing, becomes the śikṣā-guru, or the teacher who guides one along the path of bhajana. This is natural because such a person is available to the student. Although in the beginning there may be many śravaṇa gurus, a person generally accepts one among them as his or her instructing guru in the matter of bhajana, and this is due to individual taste.

This thorough explanation clarifies precisely how association is the primary influence on one's desires and progress on either of those two paths that one is qualified for and inclined to follow. It also fully corroborates the importance and necessity for advanced association. Note that Jīva Gosvāmī never said these *sādhus* will "give" one their spiritual identity. It was all about their *influence*. All such association is arranged by Kṛṣṇa according to the *jīva's* desires and *adhikāra*.

Here is another consideration about the influence of *sādhū-saṅga*. In the course of one's associations, one may spend time with those who are attracted to different types of *rasas*, but they won't all necessarily be influential in a positive way. That is precisely why Jīva Gosvāmī recommended exploration to determine whether or not one's initial inclinations are nourished by association with various devotees, and specific *līlās*.

The following is a reference from Chapter 3, Section 3 of the *Brahma-sūtras* explaining how *jīvas* in the material worlds obtain the seed of *bhakti*, along with developing inclinations for various types of *bhakti* due only to association with advanced devotees. That process is described as "descending", since *bhakti* and *prema* flow from the *nitya-siddhas* to the devotees of this world.

Topic 13 – Permission to perform two types of *bhakti*

It has been said that one should meditate on the Lord possessing qualities.

...Sometimes *ruci-bhakti* (*rāgānuga-bhakti*), using knowledge of His sweetness, is seen as the cause of attaining Him. Sometimes *vidhi-bhakti* is seen as the cause of attaining Him,

using knowledge of the Lord's power. Which of these is the cause of attaining Him, since the two are different, caused by difference in the object of worship?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) The person desiring progress will find it impossible to advance since the method cannot be determined.

By the will of the Lord, both paths of *bhakti* exist. There is no confusion about method, because of scriptural statements concerning both paths. BS, 3.3.29

The word *na* (not) is understood from *sūtra* 3.3.22. Both types of *bhakti* exist for *jīvas* of either type, because of the will of the Lord, arising by association with devotees of these types. Thus it is not true that it is impossible to have advancement. Why? Because permission is given in statements concerning these two methods.

The meaning is this. Worship of the Lord's eternal qualities of two types, starting from the groups of eternal associates, spreads to the *sādhakas* like the flow of the *Gaṅgā* from heaven to Earth.

When the *jīvas* of this universe get the chance to have devotee association (of one of these two types), the Lord, who relishes *bhakti*, desires to inspire these persons who have had devotional association to have attraction to His qualities.

These *jīvas* follow the Lord by that particular path. The devotees who give mercy to the *jīvas* are understood to be the *madhyamas*.

An intermediate or second-class devotee, called *madhyama-adhikārī*, offers his love to the Supreme Lord, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent, and disregards those who are envious of the Lord. SB, 11.2.46

Therefore one cannot accuse the Lord of being partial (since the devotee gives the mercy).

It is interesting to note that, “The devotees who give mercy to the *jīvas* are understood to be the *madhyamas*.” Not *uttamas* as one might have expected. And here we also see Kṛṣṇa's desires and will as key elements in the development of one's relationship desires.

Here is a short excerpt from *Prīti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 81, which we will examine in more detail in the next section. It is succinct and to the point about the influence of *sādhū-saṅga*.

The cause of the appearance of the particular quality of the Lord should be understood to be the devotee's particular quality of *prīti* which is attained by association with some devotee dear to the Lord.

One final point about Kṛṣṇa's direct personal involvement in the development of the *jīva*'s relationship with Him. We cannot possibly conceive of the true astonishing nature of the bodily forms and identities of the *nitya-siddha vraja-vāsīs*, and thus, those particular aspects

of the *jīva*'s desired relationship are taken care of by Kṛṣṇa through the agency of His *svarūpa-śakti* and *Yoga-māyā*.

Each devotee's personal desires for an identity and spiritual form are fulfilled perfectly and far beyond their expectations, and that becomes the basis for their eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Fulfilling those desires is the final aspect of Kṛṣṇa's participatory role in the development and manifestation of the *jīva*'s relationship with Him in *vraja-līlā*.

Thus, it is conclusively established that one's desires for a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā* are developed by the influence of *sādhū-saṅga*, and immersing oneself in the *līlās* one desires to enter. All under the personal guidance and will of Kṛṣṇa.

A relationship can only exist between two individuals with unique identities. In order to have a relationship with Kṛṣṇa one needs a suitable identity through which one can express all facets of that relationship. That is the next topic of discussion.

How Does the Jīva's Eternal Identity Manifest?

Śrīla Prabhupāda often said that the path of *bhakti-yoga* is a great science by which one can attain love of God. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* should be understood as the highest branch of that science, specifically focused on the internal transformation of one's identity for the sole/soul purpose of attaining *prema-bhakti*.

In other words, one can begin to develop one's eternal spiritual identity in this life, *before death*, which is precisely how this scientific process works. One's spiritual identity and relationship with Kṛṣṇa are not discovered or revealed *after death* in a surprise awakening. It is not a passive process, it is proactive and dynamic.

Jīvas who are still constrained by the laws of *karma* can never know exactly what type of circumstances and identity they will attain in their next life. It's impossible to predict due to so many complex *karmic* variables beyond our comprehension and control. And there is no scientific path for one to manifest a specific identity for one's next birth in the material world, notwithstanding the fact that in previous ages, one could perform sacrifices (*yajña*) to attain the heaven realms (*svarga*).

One's next temporary material identity is determined at the time of death based on one's cumulative and evolving desires, which one focused on and pursued during one's current lifetime. Those desires are then fulfilled in the next life on the basis of one's *karmic* bank account, with its debits and credits, many of which have to be factored into that overall life term. Again, it's impossible to know for certain, and we have no control over it. Most people aren't even aware that these *karmic* obligations are regulating them and everyone else in these ways.

On the other hand, to enter *Vaikuṇṭha* one does not necessarily need to focus on a specific relationship and identity because the *rasas* there are mostly *śānta* and *dāśya*, with some formal *sakhya*. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* however is very specific because of the unique nature of the *līlās* and *prema* of the *vraja-vāsīs* in *Goloka Vṛndāvana*. One must follow the *rāga* and *bhāvas* of a *vraja-vāsī* and develop one's personal embodiment and expression of that ideal. That is a major aspect of the scientific method involved in *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Desires focused on one's enjoyment of the material world will keep one eternally bound to the cycle of *karma*, whereas, desires focused on developing a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in His *līlā* have the opposite effect, since the fulfillment of those desires is not burdened with *karmic* obligations. Desire is the key factor in both cases. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* facilitates focusing one's desires on the essential aspects of one's desired eternal identity and relationship with Kṛṣṇa, with *bhakti* and *prīti* being the driving force.

Kṛṣṇa alone awards *bhāva-bhakti* on the very basis of one's desires, as focused on during one's *sādhana* and *bhajana*. We've seen that stated repeatedly. Now we will explore in more detail how *rāgānuga-bhakti* facilitates the development of one's eternal identity and how one transforms internally in that regard.

Previously we read the references from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* which described the *siddha-deha* and internal meditation on participating in the *līlā* – *līlā-smaraṇam* and *mānasī-seva*. This meditation in the context of one's desired spiritual identity (*siddha-deha*) was explained as the primary *internal* practice of *rāgānuga-bhakti*. The purpose of this *sādhana* is to develop and deepen one's desires and attachment (*āśakti*) for Kṛṣṇa – specifically in the context of the relationship and identity one is aspiring for.

In other words, the *siddha-deha* is not just your desired spiritual “body” – it is your desired spiritual “identity”, with which you can begin to internally develop a relationship with Kṛṣṇa and participate in *vraja-līlā*. And it is required to properly meditate on the *līlā*. You cannot meditate on participating in the *līlā* in the context of your *sādhaka-deha*, i.e., your material identity. The *siddha-deha* is a primary component in the process of one's internal development of *bhakti*, *prīti*, and identity transformation.

It is very important to understand the sequence of this development. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* is a practice, a *sādhana* designed to help one deepen one's *bhakti* (*prīti*) to the point where it attracts Kṛṣṇa enough for Him to award *bhāva-bhakti*, which soon evolves into *prema-bhakti*. That intensification of *prīti* is a direct consequence of the focus on one's desired spiritual identity, and developing a deep relational attachment (*āśakti*) to Kṛṣṇa internally in that context.

To become qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti* with genuine intense desires (*lobha*), one must first determine which one of the four types of relationships one desires to have with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*, and which *vraja-vāsī* one will follow to attain that mood and relationship. That logically leads to desiring a suitable identity with which one can interact with Kṛṣṇa in that type of relationship. You can't have an interactive relationship without having an appropriate identity.

It's also important to understand that the desire for a particular type of relationship comes first and then *prema* of that type of relationship is eventually attained. That is the sequence. There is no generic *prema*. It is relationship specific. One cannot attain *vraja-prema* without first having a suitable *vraja* identity to engage in that relationship.

A relationship is an exchange between two individuals, i.e., two separate identities (personalities). Having an identity obviously implies having a form as well, which is the external medium for expressing one's personality and emotions. However, the exchange of love between the devotee and Kṛṣṇa is the exchange between two identities, not just two bodies.

This point about distinguishing between one's spiritual body and one's spiritual identity is a subtle but important distinction. Here is the perfect example to illustrate this point. Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā* manifests His youthful cowherd boy body, and everyone in Vraja sees that same exact bodily form of Kṛṣṇa, wearing a yellow garment, flower garlands, a flute in His hand, peacock feather in His hair, etc. But they each see a different "identity" in Kṛṣṇa. Some see Him as their friend, others see Him as their child or young relative, and the *gopīs* see Him as their lover. This is also explained in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*.

Various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme lord's universal form, the *yogīs* as the Absolute Truth, and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity. SB, 10.43.17

What they were all seeing was Kṛṣṇa's identity directly in the context of their relationship with Him – not just His bodily form. Kṛṣṇa shows one form but different identities for each devotee according to their relationship and the nature of the love they exchange. Jīva Gosvāmī discusses these points in the upcoming *Anucchedas*.

Thus, one's *siddha-deha* is the genesis for the development of one's desired identity in the *līlā* so one can engage in a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Typically, one will use the *ekādaśa-bhāvas* as the basis for defining their *siddha-deha*, ideally under qualified guidance. That is not the same as *siddha-praṇālī dīkṣā*.

In his commentary in Chapter 15 of *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discusses the *ekādaśa-bhāvas* and the *guru's* role in guiding the disciple.

When the spiritual master is ascertaining the aspirant's pure personal inclinations, the aspirant should also help the spiritual master by speaking his mind about his own preferences. As long as he has not clearly established the disciple's inclinations, the guru's directions are not flawless.

The inclinations that have been shaped by one's meritorious deeds, through both this and previous lives, are called *ruci* or taste [this is not referring to the stage of *ruci*]. This particular inclination, however, is integral to the soul.²⁰ Should a person not have a natural inclination for *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, (*mādhurya-rasa*) but for servitude or friendship, then he should be instructed accordingly; if not, there will be undesirable consequences.

...Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teaching is that every practitioner should be assessed according to both aptitude and qualifications. HNC, 15.73-74

The *ekādaśa-bhāvas* were first delineated in Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī's, *Gaura-govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati*, which he compiled under the guidance of his *guru*, Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī, who was a contemporary of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and a disciple of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita (*Tuṅavidyā*), who was taught directly by Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī (*Lalitā*).

It is important to understand that the *ekādaśa-bhāvas* are just the basic parameters of an identity, i.e., they are a framework, a starting point, the finer details of which will be revealed by mercy alone in the course of one's progress. This culminates in Kṛṣṇa fulfilling all of one's desires at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, including awarding a suitable spiritual identity and body of *svarūpa-śakti*. That is *svarūpa-siddhi* on the highest level.

Let's now examine these *Anucchedas* from *Prīti Sandarbha* which discuss how the devotee's spiritual identity manifests due to *prīti* for a particular identity of Kṛṣṇa. This lengthy and sublimely lucid *Anuccheda* reveals many incredible nuances in the matter of having a relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Here are the highlights.

Anuccheda 81

It has been shown that the degree of *prīti*'s appearance depends on the degree of the Lord's appearance. The difference in *prīti* and degree of the *prīti* depends on the degree of excellence of various qualities of *prīti*. The qualities are of two types: those which cause particular purification of the heart of the devotee, and those which cause a particular identity.

The *svarūpas* of the first type of qualities of *prīti*, causing purification of the heart, and the degree and difference in *prīti* are as follows. *Prīti* brings joy to the heart of the devotee, produces union by possessiveness, causes encouragement, causes identity as a dear person, melts the heart, connects the person with the object of love by desire, at every moment causes experience of the loved one in new ways, and causes madness because of unequalled astonishment.

Prīti which is only marked by additional joy is called *rati*. When that appears, Kṛṣṇa becomes the only goal and everything else is considered insignificant. *Prīti* increased by manifestation of possessiveness is called *prema*. When that occurs, causes for stopping the *prīti* cannot weaken the *svarūpa* or the endeavors.

²⁰ This sentence is an example of statements by a later *ācārya* which imply an inherent *rasa* in the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*.

...Now, qualities causing a particular identity for the devotee and the differences and degrees in the *prīti* and the devotee caused by it are discussed. After one develops a connection with a special quality of the Lord, one develops a relationship as the object of mercy (*dāsyā*), showing compassion to the Lord (*vātsalya*), friendship with the Lord (*sakhya*) or dear lover (*mādhurya*).

The cause of the appearance of the particular quality of the Lord should be understood to be the devotee's particular quality of *prīti* which is attained by association with some devotee dear to the Lord. These two (the identity of the devotee and the quality in the Lord) are eternal for the eternal associates (*nitya-siddhas*).

The *prīti* filled with identity of being the object of the Lord's mercy is well known as *bhakti*. *Bhakti* with knowledge of the Lord as the object of worship follows after this.

...The word *bhakti* is sometimes used for a relationship with the Lord with desire and possessiveness. However, the chief meaning of *bhakti* is *prīti* filled with identity of the Lord being merciful. This identity of the Lord as merciful is of two types: nourishment and compassion, since mercy has these two components.

Nourishment means the Lord gives bliss by His *svarūpa* and His qualities. Compassion means that though the Lord is complete, He develops a desire that the devotee serve Him, and thus gives auspicious service to the devotee.

Compassion is this desire to assist the devotee, since the Lord has a soft heart. Among devotees with these two types of identity of the Lord, some are without possessiveness (seeing the Lord as giver of bliss) and some have possessiveness (seeing the Lord as compassionate).

Those with no possessiveness are *jñānī-bhaktas* like the Kumāras, who see the Lord as a giver of bliss by being Paramātmā and the supreme Brahman. Such non-possessiveness of the Lord in that form is described as follows:

O Supreme Lord, when difference disappears, I am yours. You are not mine. The ocean is the wave but the wave is never the ocean. (Sāṅkarācārya's verse quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*)

For such persons, seeing the Lord gives *prīti* but without possessiveness, just as one sees the moon and experiences bliss without possessiveness. Favorableness in this mood is understood since the devotee recites verses of praise with humility.

The *prīti* of these devotees is called *jñāna-bhakti*. Its *jñāna* portion consists of realizing the Lord as condensed Brahman. This is called *śānti-bhakti* because *śama* is predominant. The Lord says *śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddheḥ*: *śama* means fixing the mind on Me. (SB, 11.19.36)

Devotees with possessiveness experience the Lord as a compassionate person. Their possessiveness arises with the thought, “This Lord is ours”. The verse starting with *ananya-mamatā* mentions devotees like Bhīṣma, Uddhava, Prahlāda, and Nārada, and not the Kumāras. With the arousal of possessiveness, recognizing and identifying the Lord as compassionate arises.

Compassion has three types: being protected, being a servant and being cared for. These three types successively are seen in the people of Dvārakā, who see Kṛṣṇa as their protector, in Dārūka and other servants who see Kṛṣṇa as the person worthy of service, and in sons and younger brothers like Pradyumna, Gada and others who see Kṛṣṇa as a parent. The *prīti* of these three types is called *bhakti*.

Because, compared to the previous type, which has a covering of *jñāna*, their *prīti* has greater favorability, it is called *prīti* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. This *bhakti* becomes filled with the idea that the Lord is the shelter for those who see Him as protector. It becomes filled with *dāsyā* for the servants, and it becomes filled with modesty for those who see themselves as cared for by Him.

That *bhakti* characterized by reverence, indicated by offering respects etc., while seeing the Lord as great (without seeing oneself as the object of His mercy, *anugrāhya*), is not *prīti* at all. It is not considered here. If *prīti* is filled with pure respect without particular *bhāvas* for the Lord as protector, object of service or parent it is regarded as ordinary *bhakti* (*sāmānya-bhakti*).

If the *prīti* with identity of being merciful to the Lord has the mood, “This is my son”, it is called *vātsalyam*. It means, “give (*la*) the child (*vatsa*) the breast.” This gives a clear understanding of the sentiment. The word *vātsalya* is sometimes used to indicate merely *prīti* or affection, since this mood represents that quality well.

Some materialistic knowers of *rasa* use the term *vātsalya-rasa* for general *prīti*. An example of *vātsalya* is Devahūti in separation. *Vatse gaur iva vatsalā*: she was like a cow aggrieved when losing a calf. (SB, 3.33.21) Thus Yaśodā and others have *vātsalyam*.

When *prīti* identifies the Lord as a friend with the mood, “He has the same sweet qualities as I have and is the best shelter of unconditional affection”, it is called *maitrī*. This has two types: *sauhṛt* (comradeship) filled with a taste for helping each other unconditionally and *sakhya* (intimate friendship) filled with affection while playing. Thus the friends are of two types: *suhṛts* and *sakhas*. *Sauhṛt* is seen partially in Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīṣma and Draupadī. *Sakhya* is seen in Arjuna, Śrīdāma and others.

Prīti with the mood, “He is my lover”, is called *kānta-bhāva*. It is called *priyatā* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. *Priyatā* means having the mood of a lover. The materialistic knowers of *rasa* called this *rati*. Since it is similar to *kāma* it is called *kāma* in relation to the *gopīs*’ love for Kṛṣṇa. *Kāma* known as material Cupid is different because of the difference in sentiment. Ordinary *kāma* is filled with ordinary desire.

...Thus *jñāna-bhakti* (*śānta*), *bhakti* (*dāsyā*), *vātsalyam*, *maitrī* (*sakhya*) and *kānta-bhāva* (*mādhurya*) are the five types of *prīti* with differences in *bhāva* and identity of Kṛṣṇa. Types like *jñāna-bhakti* are sometimes mixed.

Thus Bhīṣma has *āśraya-bhakti* (a type of *dāsyā*) and *jñāna-bhakti*.

Yudhiṣṭhira has *vātsalya* and *āśraya-bhakti* included in *sauhṛt*.

Bhīma however had *sakhya* included in *sauhṛt*.

Kuntī had *vātsalya* included in *āśraya-bhakti*.

Vasudeva and Devakī had *sāmānya-bhakti* and *vātsalya*.

Uddhava had *sakhya* included in *dāsyā*.

Baladeva has *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *bhakti* (*dāsyā*).

...In *Vraja*, [Balarāma's] *vātsalya* and *bhakti* (*dāsyā*) are included in *sakhya* since He played with Kṛṣṇa constantly from His infancy. In *Dvārakā* He shows *vātsalya* and *sakhya* included in *bhakti* (*dāsyā*) since in that place Kṛṣṇa revealed pastimes filled with power. In *Vraja* He acted as an elder brother since Vasudeva (His father) and Nanda were well known to be brothers and Nanda took Him as his son and protected Him.

...The queens in *Dvārakā* have *kānta-bhāva* mixed with *dāsyā* (identifying as servants). The *gopīs* of *Vraja* have *kānta-bhāva* mixed with *sakhya*.

...According to the different types of devotees, the Lord is seen differently with their different types of *prīti*.

That last sentence says it all succinctly. As usual, there is a lot more complexity than many devotees may have previously understood regarding the overlapping of *rasas* in various devotees. None of the examples given above are considered *rasābhāsa* either.

One more important point needs to be made. The statement that the *gopīs* of *Vraja* also have an aspect of *sakhya*, should not be misinterpreted as them having inclinations like the *sakhas*, i.e., they do not aspire to be cowherd boys.

It simply means they are “girl-friends” as opposed to “boy-friends”. *Sakhya* just means intimate friendship. It does not mean cowherd boy. Anyone who has read the *līlā* books will understand clearly what the differences are between those two types of *sakhya*.

I've mentioned this because some devotees actually misconstrue it as such. They have argued that *mañjarīs* also have inclinations like the cowherd boys. This argument was made in an attempt to prove that Śrīla Prabhupada's *rasa* is a *mañjarī*, even though he indicated *sakhya-rasa* in his poem written on the *Jaladuta*.

This next *Anuccheda* explores the manifestation of one's identity in more detail.

Anuccheda 91

We say that *prīti* with a particular identity and *prema* arise only with the appearance of the nature of the Lord. It was shown in *Bhāgavata Sandarbha* that all the manifestations of the Lord, being *svarūpa-siddha*, are eternally in the Lord. Various types of worship are described in the scriptures.

As one worships a particular manifestation of the Lord, *prīti* with a particular identity arises for that manifestation. The cause of worshipping that particular manifestation of the Lord is association with particular types of devotees who inspire a person for that form. But among the *nitya-siddhas* that manifestation and the identity are also *nitya-siddha*.

Śrī Jīva makes it clear in the above paragraph that association with *sādhus* “inspires” one's inclinations. There was no mention of *sādhus* “giving” a *rasa* or spiritual identity – only inspiration. Śrīla Prabhupāda inspired thousands of devotees to worship Vraja Kṛṣṇa.

Continuing...

It has been said the identity, a particular function of *prīti*, arises along with the *prīti*. Therefore *prīti* will not be damaged by that connection. Rather, *prīti* takes joy in that particular identity which signifies intimate connection with the Lord.

In material relationships, a strong sense of possessiveness produces affection for another object more than for the self. One sees attachment to a son, and decrease of attachment to self.

...Possessiveness of the Lord is caused by the particular identity in the *ātmā*. It has been said that a particular identity is caused by the particular nature of the Lord. The identity in the *ātmā* appears first and then possessiveness appears. Thus the root cause of *prīti* is the nature of the Lord.

This statement from the last paragraph is very important: “The identity appears first, and then possessiveness appears.” In other words, one must first have an identity so one can develop possessiveness for Kṛṣṇa in the context of that identity and relationship and the *identity* of Kṛṣṇa one is attracted to. This is explained further in the next *Anuccheda*.

Anuccheda 92

Prīti rejoices at the identification of devotees in relation to the Lord. The Lord also takes up identities:

You think of Kṛṣṇa as your cousin, as a dear friend, as your selfless helper, and out of affection made Him your counselor, messenger, and charioteer.

...Out of friendship, because of *prema* of that nature, you make Him your counselor, messenger, and charioteer. You think of Him as cousin, as the object of *prīti*, as one who expresses *prīti*, as the one who helps without expecting help, and even as a charioteer. The phrases are connected with the subject “Kṛṣṇa who is directly Bhagavān” in the last verse.

“Let us accept that our minds concentrate on the Lord with special *prīti*. He is the Paramātmā of everyone, and thus sees everything equally. He is non-dual since as Paramātmā He is non-different from all *ātmās* which are His *śaktis*. Thus being without fault, He cannot have an identity such as ‘I am your cousin’.”

The argument that the Lord should not become a cousin since He is non-dual is refuted in the next two verses (21-22). Even though this is not possible, see the mercy the Lord shows to pure devotees.

O king! The Lord is controlled by their particular *bhakti* and thus thinks of Himself according to their *bhakti*. The cause of relationship with the body is His identity. That is the main cause of the relationship, not the body. His identity as a cousin is produced in relation to His body by His manifestation on Earth.

Once again for emphasis: “The cause of relationship with the body is His identity. That is the main cause of the relationship, not the body.” Concise, clear and conclusive. No ambiguity. No speculation necessary.

Having explored these complexities regarding the manifestation of one’s spiritual identity, it should be more than obvious that one’s spiritual identity and relationship with Kṛṣṇa are not an inherent part of the *jīva*’s *svarūpa*. This part of *Prīti Sandarbha* would have been another perfect opportunity for Jīva Gosvāmī to elaborate on that idea if it were the case. But no such statements were made or implied.

Instead, we learned that it is the devotee’s desires and intense *prīti* that compel Kṛṣṇa to manifest a specific identity in response to the desires of each devotee. And those desires of the *jīva* for a particular relational identity of Kṛṣṇa are influenced and developed by association of similarly inclined devotees – all arranged by Kṛṣṇa.

How Does Prema Manifest in the Jīva’s Svarūpa?

One of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s main preaching messages was that love of God is dormant in everyone’s heart. Now we will examine what he stated in this regard and compare it with the previous *ācāryas*’ presentation. To help understand why Śrīla Prabhupāda presented certain things the way he did, we will first discuss this well known verse from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, 22.107. It’s not cryptic Sanskrit like the *sūtras* in the *Brahma-sūtras*, rather, it’s simple Bengali.

*nitya-siddha-kṛṣṇa-prema sādhya kabhu naya
sravanādi-suddha citte karaye udaya*

nitya-siddha – eternally established; *kṛṣṇa-prema* – love of Kṛṣṇa; *sādhya* – to be gained; *kabhu* – at any time; *naya* – not; *śravaṇa-adi* – by hearing, etc; *suddha* – purified; *citte* — in the heart; *karaye udaya* – awakens.

Here is Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation:

Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, this love naturally awakens.

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't provide a purport for this verse. For comparison, here is a rendering of that verse from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindhu*, his summary study of Rūpa Gosvāmī's book. Śrī Viśvanātha first explains that *bhāva* descends from the eternal associates who possess *bhāva* eternally – *nitya-siddha*.

The word *nitya-siddha* has been used in this verse in order to dispel this doubt [that *bhāva* is produced]. *Bhāva* is an eternally accomplished phenomenon (*nitya-siddha*). It always exists in the eternal associates (*nitya-parikaras*) of Bhagavān. This *nitya-siddha-bhāva* manifests itself from the Lord's eternal associates into the heart of the purified *jīva*. This is verified in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.107):

Kṛṣṇa *prema* is an eternally established reality (*nitya-siddha*); it is not brought about by *sādhana* (*sādhya kabhu naya*).

It automatically manifests itself (*karaye udaya*) in the heart (*citte*) purified (*suddha*) by the performance of the various limbs of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so on (*sravanādi*).

This translation and commentary is perfectly aligned with what we have learned about the *jīva's svarūpa*, i.e., there is no *prema* inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*. That was confirmed by evidence from *śāstra* and all the previous *ācāryas*. And we will now see the clear evidence to support that *prema* descends by the agency of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti* into the heart of the *sādhaka* who has attained the stage of *bhāva-bhakti* by Kṛṣṇa's direct mercy.

In the chapter on *Sādhana-bhakti* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the following verse and its commentaries explains exactly how *bhāva* appears in the heart of a devotee, *bhāva* being the seed or ray of *prema*.

*kṛti-sādhyā bhavet sādhya-bhāvā sā sādhanābhīdā
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya prākṛtyaṁ hṛdi sādhyatā*

Now *sādhana-bhakti* will be defined:

Action of the senses, which produces the stage of *bhāva*, is called *sādhana-bhakti*. This attained state of *bhāva-bhakti* (*sādhya*) is an eternal *sthayi-bhāva* (*nitya-siddhasya bhavasya*) which is not created, but simply manifests within the soul by the spiritual energy of the Lord. BRS, 1.2.2

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

A doubt may arise that since this state is achieved (*sādhya*), implying that it is artificially produced, it is not the ultimate goal. The second line responds to this doubt by saying that it is eternal, and simply appears within the heart. That is because its appearance (but not its creation) will be accomplished in the future by the special actions of the most excellent transformations (*saṁvit* and *hlādinī*) of the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti* (which are perfect and eternal).

From Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary:

The word *sādhya* means, “produced” or “achieved”. Hence, the phrase *sādhya-bhāvā* can mean, “that by which *bhāva* is produced”. This may give rise to the fear that, though *bhāva-bhakti* has been mentioned as supreme, it may not actually be the supreme goal of human endeavor, because it is produced artificially or achieved (i.e. it is not eternal). The answer is given in the second line. This *bhāva* is eternal (*nitya-siddhasya bhavasya*), and merely appears within the heart of the devotee.

The above commentaries by these *ācāryas* are describing the exact same truth as stated in the verse from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Prema* descends into the heart – it is not dormant there.

Mukunda dāsa Gosvāmī, a disciple of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, is another commentator on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and in his *Artha-ratna-lpa-dīpikā* commentary, he states that the term *nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya* in the BRS, 1.2.2 *śloka* means the *bhāva* of the *nitya-siddha* associates of Bhagavān – not that it is within the *jīva*. Mukunda dāsa Gosvāmī writes:

“The pure *sattva* which is ever present in the *nitya-siddha* devotees manifests itself [in the heart of the practitioner devotee] and thus should not be seen as artificial.”

Now let's compare the above translation, including the commentaries from Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, to Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation of this same verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.2) as it appears in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 2.22.105.

When transcendental devotional service, by which love for Kṛṣṇa is attained, is executed by the senses, it is called *sādhana-bhakti*, or the regulative discharge of devotional service. Such devotion eternally exists within the heart of every living entity. The awakening of this eternal devotion is the potentiality of devotional service in practice.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is being consistent with his preaching message in this translation and purport, however, he doesn't make it clear that this verse is specifically discussing the goal of *sādhana*, i.e., the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, which is a ray of *prema*.

He refers to devotion in a general sense and says that this devotion (*bhakti*) is inherent in the *jīva*. But this verse is specifically about attaining *bhāva-bhakti*, and *bhāva* is not inherent in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*, as the commentaries for that verse confirm.

What Śrīla Prabhupāda is essentially referring to is the fact that the constitutional position of all *jīvas* is that they are eternally servants of Kṛṣṇa – *jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa* (CC, 2.20.108). That inherent aspect of the *jīva's svarūpa* is the basis for *jīvas* being eligible to receive the seed of *bhakti* – *bhakti-latā-bīja*. Once the seed of *bhakti* is received, the *jīva's* natural, innate servant connection with Kṛṣṇa is activated for the first time.

Rūpa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and Mukunda dāsa Gosvāmī all made it very clear that *bhāva* is not inherent in the *jīva* because it is *svarūpa-śakti*, and it manifests in the heart of the *jīva* by the mercy and action of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*.

Prema exists eternally in the hearts of the *nitya-siddhas* and descends from them into the heart of the *jīva*. What is intrinsic in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is the *potential* and *eligibility* to receive the seed of *bhakti*, and the subsequent gift of *prema*, because, *jīvera svarūpa haya – kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa*.

Here is additional confirmation of these facts from the first verse of the next chapter in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which discusses *bhāva-bhakti*. It proves irrefutably that *bhāva* and *prema* are *svarūpa-śakti*, which can never be dormant or inherent within *taṭastha-śakti*.

That part of *bhakti* is called *bhāva*, whose essence is *samvit* and *hlādinī-śakti*, which is one ray of the sun of *prema*, which will soon rise in the heart, and which softens the heart with desires to meet, serve, and exchange love with the Lord. BRS, 1.3.1

From Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

Therefore, the meaning is this. That general *bhakti*, which was defined as favorable service to the Lord, is called *bhāva* when referring to one particular portion of it called *bhāva-rūpa-bhakti*. What is the essential nature of that *bhāva*? *Bhāva* has, as its *svarūpa* or essence, Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*, in the form of *hlādinī* and *samvit*.

This *svarūpa* is an eternal object, an eternal manifestation (*nitya-siddha*), situated within the eternal dear associates of the Lord. Uniting itself with its place of appearance (namely, the mind of the devotee), this *bhāva* becomes a variety of mental conditions (*citta-vṛtti*) characterized by a favorable attitude to the Lord.

...This *bhāva* is also the sprout, which will become *prema*, and which will be described later.

By comparing *prema* to the sun, there is the suggestion that, just as the sun will appear soon after the light of dawn, *prema* will appear very soon after the appearance of *bhāva*. As well, it is like a ray of the sun; it is the first glow of the sun of *prema*. It will be explained later that *prema* is the condensed form of *bhāva*: (BRS 1.4.1)

This *bhāva*, whose very form is the essence of the *hlādinī* function of the Lord, should also be understood to be non-material, since it makes the happiness of liberation insignificant, brings about the Lord's appearance, and produces bliss.

If one is particularly inquisitive about proofs, one should see the *Prīti Sandarbha*. Though this *bhāva* is seen in the eternal associates of the Lord, the mental conditions of the devotees within this world become similar, by the mercy of the Lord and His devotees. By this mercy alone it shall appear. There is no need to elaborate further.

To reiterate for emphasis: “By this mercy alone [*bhāva*] shall appear. There is no need to elaborate further.” These commentaries from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, are a direct lucid explanation of the verse from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, since they are stating the same exact thing. Thus, there can be no doubts or arguments about the translation and meaning of the *nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema* verse because of the preponderance of supporting evidence.

In *Paramātmā Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 93.4, Jīva Gosvāmī also confirms that *bhakti* is an aspect of the *hlādinī-śakti* and therefore it cannot be inherent in the *taṭastha-śakti jīva's svarūpa*. But devotees possess *bhakti*, having been “given” the seed of *bhakti* (*bhakti-latā-bīja*) from a devotee.

Continuing with the commentary...

...Moreover, the energetic aspect called *hlādinī* [the potency of bliss] is the essence of the intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakti*), even though the latter is the ultimate essence [of all of Bhagavān's potencies]. And the essence even of that *hlādinī* aspect is a very special power, called *bhakti*.

This *bhakti*, also called *rati*, ever resides both in Bhagavān and the devotees, extending her functions on both sides. Thus it is said, "Bhagavān is He who has devotion for His devotees" (*Bhagavān bhakta-bhaktiman*, SB, 10.86.59).

...verses 1 and 2 [i.e., 63-64] show that *bhakti* is the essence of *hlādinī*, which is in turn the essence of the *svarūpa-śakti*. The state of the devotees when this potency enters into them in the form of *bhakti* is described in verse 5. Therefore, Bhagavān is not subject to the first flaw, that of not being satisfied in His own Self.

This collective evidence could not be more clear and conclusive, and it is from the highest authorities. There was nothing ambiguous, and the details were straightforward, as always. *Bhāva*, the ray of *prema*, both of which are manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*, are not

inherent in the *taṭastha-śakti jīva's svarūpa*. *Bhāva*, and subsequently *prema*, manifest in the *jīva's* heart by the mercy and agency of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*.

The simple truth is that *svarūpa-śakti* cannot be, and is not, “dormant” within *taṭastha-śakti*. In fact, as we saw from all the detailed evidence presented, there is nothing dormant in the *jīva's svarūpa*. However, because the *jīva* is *taṭastha-śakti*, and constitutionally a servant of Kṛṣṇa, it is *eligible* and it has the *potential* and *capacity* to be imbued with *bhakti* and *prema* by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, His devotees, and His *svarūpa-śakti*.

In other words, because the *taṭastha-śakti jīva* is simultaneously one with and different from Kṛṣṇa, it is qualified by its oneness with the eligibility to receive the *svarūpa-śakti* in the form of *bhakti*, *bhāva* and *prema*. They all manifest because of the mercy and collective influence from Kṛṣṇa, *guru*, and advanced devotees, based on one's intense desires cultivated during *sādhana*. All of *śāstra* and the previous *ācāryas* teach that. It is ubiquitous in their writings, and we've seen many such references.

Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements in this regard must be understood to be congruent with his consistent preaching message: “Love of God is in your heart. Just chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and it will be awakened.” It's a simple yet powerful message which was extremely effective for the general public and his neophyte followers, which were the core of Śrīla Prabhupāda's worldwide audience.

As was shown, the essence of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements was based on the underlying truth of the eternal master-servant relationship (*sambandha*) between Kṛṣṇa and the *jīvas*. Śrīla Prabhupāda's unprecedented success validates the effectiveness of his simplified approach, and certainly indicates Kṛṣṇa's full support for his methods and efforts.

After examining all of this evidence, as well as understanding Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching messages, we can readily conclude that there was absolutely no fault in Śrīla Prabhupāda's simplification of these details for the purpose of preaching to spread his mission. Effective preaching is one thing, and teaching more complex details is another.

No one else could have done what Śrīla Prabhupāda accomplished to spread Lord Caitanya's movement around the world through his preaching and books. He planted the seed of *bhakti* in the hearts of thousands of disciples, and made Hare Kṛṣṇa! a household phrase – in many towns and villages worldwide.

How and When Does the Jīva's Spiritual Body Manifest?

In my first book about *rāgānuga-bhakti*, I discussed how one's spiritual body manifests in three distinct phases. According to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, there are actually three successive spiritual bodies, of which the *siddha-deha* is the first, although technically it is a “mentally conceived spiritual body” as described by Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

After the *siddha-deha*, there is the body, or stage, referred to as *svarūpa-siddhi*, which occurs at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, and finally, *vastu-siddhi*, when one takes birth in *bhauma-līlā*. They correspond to three distinct phases of progress towards the ultimate goal of entering the unmanifested eternal *līlā* (*aprakṛta-nitya-līlā*).

Here is a breakdown based on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's description of these three spiritual forms corresponding to a devotee's stage of progress, with an explanation of the function of that particular spiritual body.

Spiritual Body: *siddha-deha* (aka: *siddha-rūpa*)

Function: The desired, mentally conceived spiritual form for relationship and identity development in *rāgānuga-bhajana* meditation – *mānasī-seva*. This body and identity is established using the template of the *ekādaśa-bhāvas*, the eleven aspects of the devotee's desired spiritual identity.

Stages: *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*

Spiritual Body: *svarūpa-siddhi* (aka: *siddha-svarūpa*)

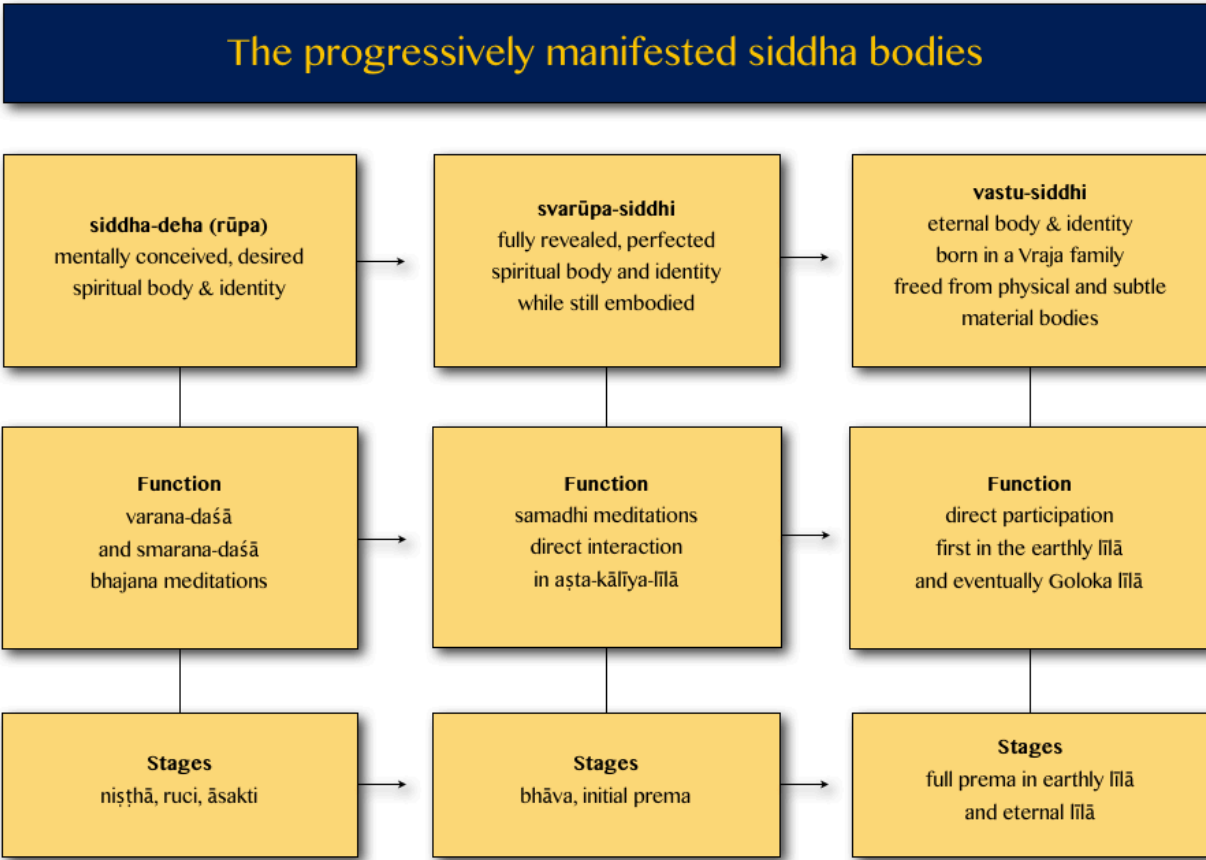
Function: This is the realized spiritual form and identity for direct participation in *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* via meditation in *samādhi*, while one is still within the physical and subtle bodies. When one attains *bhāva*, this spiritual body and identity are bestowed directly by Kṛṣṇa according to one's desires and preferences previously cultivated while meditating on one's *siddha-deha* during *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhajana*.

Stages: *bhāva*, *prema* (beginning stages only)

Spiritual Body: *vastu-siddhi*

Function: When we are completely freed from the physical and subtle material bodies, we will take birth from a *nitya-siddha* Vraja *gopī*. In that transcendental body and identity, we will engage directly in Kṛṣṇa's manifest eternal pastimes (*prakṛta-nitya-līlā*) in an earthly realm in one of the unlimited universes. After our *prema* is fully perfected there, we are seamlessly transferred to the unmanifest eternal pastimes (*aprakṛta-nitya-līlā*) in that same body of *svarūpa-śakti*.

Stages: *prema* in *bhauma-līlā* and *aprakṛta-līlā* in the spiritual world.



In this excerpt from Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's commentary on Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛita*, he describes the *sādhaka's siddha-deha* related to one's *sādhana* meditations and when one subsequently attains *bhāva-bhakti*. He confirms the fact that the *siddha-deha* is one's mentally conceived spiritual identity for the purpose of internal meditation.

Bilvamaṅgala developed a greed for Rādhā on hearing about Rādhā's *anurāga* for Kṛṣṇa from the mouth of the prostitute. This produced his worship on the path of *rāgānuga*. On this path of *rāgānuga*, even the *sādhakas* who have not developed *bhāva*, produce in their minds a desired spiritual body (*siddha-deha*) and perform service to the Lord in that body.

That body appears spontaneously, however, in persons who have developed *bhāva* or *rati*. Bilvamaṅgala had developed *bhāva* of the *madhura* type and then attained the level of *anurāga* (after *prema*, *sneha*, and *rāga*). At that time, his spiritual body was continually present. SKK, 1

In *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Sanātana Gosvāmī explains the same thing about the *siddha-deha*.

In his internal meditation, the *sādhaka* serves the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a particular *rasa*, with a form, dress, and so on that are suitable for his service. Achieving

perfection at the end of his life, he enters Vaikuṇṭha. At that time, his heart is attracted to that previous *rasa* in which, while he was in the *sādhaka* stage, he worshiped the Lord, and he accepts an identical dress and form, knowing them to be dear to Śrī Bhagavān. BB, 2.4.145-146

From Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary:

Whoever comes to Vaikuṇṭha realizes the very same service to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa for which he had developed a taste by the end of his material life, and he realizes that service in full detail, with its dress, form, and so on, for each mood of devotion is dear to the Personality of Godhead and each gives pleasure to the devotee absorbed in it.

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura summarizes this process in *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*.

I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that. Whatever I think of during my spiritual practice (*sādhana*) I will attain in my *siddha-deha* when I reach perfection. This is the means of *rāga-bhakti*.

The treasure I desire as a practitioner I will get when I attain my spiritual body (*siddha-deha*); it is just a question of being ripe or unripe. The ripe stage is the stage of pure devotion (*prema-bhakti*), and the unripe stage is the stage of practice (*sādhana-bhakti*). That is the essential truth about devotional principles. PBC, 55-56

Regarding *vastu-siddhi*, when does a devotee at the stage of *prema-bhakti* finally leave their body and take birth in *bhauma-līlā*, and why is that a necessary step in the process? Why don't those who attain *prema-bhakti* go directly "back to Godhead"? Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this in Kṛṣṇa Book.

The mature devotees, who have completely executed Kṛṣṇa consciousness, are immediately transferred to the universe where Kṛṣṇa is appearing. In that universe the devotees get their first opportunity to associate with Kṛṣṇa personally and directly. The training goes on, as we see in the Vṛndāvana *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa within this planet. KB, Chapter 28, Releasing Nanda Mahārāja from the Clutches of Varuṇa

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the same thing in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*.

After giving up the body, the devotee who becomes perfect in devotional service enters that particular universe where Lord Rāmacandra or Lord Krishna is engaged in His pastimes. Then, after being trained to serve the Lord in various capacities in that *prakṛta-līlā*, the devotee is finally promoted to *sanātana-dhāma*, the supreme abode in the spiritual world. SB, 9.11.22, purport

In *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that taking birth in *bhauma-līlā* is necessary so one can obtain the full relational context for their eternal identity, i.e., who their parents and relatives are, their future husband, etc. As well, there is still more

development and refinement of one's *prema* that can only be done in the direct association of the *nitya-siddha vraja-vāsīs* and Kṛṣṇa.

One may ask, “Why don't you say that when the *sādhaka* attains the stage of *prema* and leaves his body, he will take a *gopīka* body in the spiritual world without taking birth from the womb of a *gopīka*, after which he manifests *sneha* [the higher stages of *prema*] and so on, there in that body through the association of the eternally perfect *gopīs*?”

The answer here is, “No, that will not happen, because then one cannot get a harmonious acquaintance according to the human-like pastimes there, like: ‘Whose daughter is this *sakhī*? Whose wife is she? Whose daughter-in-law is she?’”

“Alright then,” one may say, “what is the harm in taking birth in the *aprākata-līlā*?” Then the answer is no, that also cannot be. *Sādhakas* or materially conditioned souls cannot enter into the transcendental manifestation named Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma. Only perfected souls can enter it. Even through one's own *sādhana* the moods of *sneha* and so on are not easily attained.

Therefore, those devotees for whom *yoga-māyā*, for the sake of perfecting their moods like *sneha* and so on, arranges that *prema* is manifest in them after they take birth in Kṛṣṇa's materially manifest pastimes in Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma, and before they attain Kṛṣṇa's bodily association, they are taken to Kṛṣṇa's materially manifest pastimes in Vṛndāvana.

Because practicing devotees, *karmīs*, and perfected devotees can all be seen to enter into the materially manifest Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma, it is experienced as both *sādhaka bhūmi* and *siddha bhūmi*.

Then if you say, “Where will those most eager *sādhakas* stay after they attain *prema* and until they attain a *gopīka* body, after leaving their material bodies?”

Then I answer, “After the *sādhaka* body perishes, that loving devotee, who has eagerly desired direct devotional service for a long time, will at once, by the Lord's grace, receive the gift of the desired service and the audience of the Lord and His eternal associates, just as He once bestowed direct audience to Nārada Muni.

He will give the *sādhaka* a transcendental *gopīka* body. *Yoga-māyā* will make that body take birth from a *gopīka* mother in the manifest pastimes when Kṛṣṇa descends to Earth with His eternal associates. There will not be a moment's delay in that because the *prākata-līlā* goes on without interruption. He will take birth in that material universe where Kṛṣṇa plays His manifest Vṛndāvana *līlā* at that time. Kṛṣṇa and His associates appear when the loving practicing devotee leaves his body.”

Therefore, O greatly eager *anurāgī* devotees, don't be afraid! Be at ease! All is auspicious for You! RVC, 2.7

Those who attain Vaikuṇṭha do not have to undergo any preliminary stage of development prior to entering Vaikuṇṭha. It is direct because there is no need for the orientation described above by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, all of which is unique due to the human-like nature of *vraja-līlā*, which is also known as *nara-līlā*. Sanātana Gosvāmī has provided elaborate descriptions of the residents of Vaikuṇṭha in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, which reveals some of the differences between those two realms.

Besides manifesting pastimes for the pleasure of His devotees, and for the benefit of all conditioned *jīvas*, another important purpose of Kṛṣṇa's *bhauma-līlā* is to facilitate the new *sādhakas* who attained *prema-bhakti* in their previous lives, thus qualifying them to take birth in *bhauma-līlā* to begin their eternal lives. It is required because of the special sweet nature of Kṛṣṇa's *nara-līlā* – human-like pastimes.

Having attained entrance into *bhauma-līlā*, all you will know is that you were born in Vṛndāvana along with all the *nitya-siddha vraja-vāsīs*, and you grew up with them as relatives, friends and associates, experiencing the same *līlās* we have all read in the Tenth Canto. That establishes the full context of one's identity and relationships for eternity.

First Deserve – Then Desire

Many devotees are familiar with a situation that occurred in Los Angeles California, in 1976, regarding a group of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples who met regularly to read his newly published *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. That group was labelled, “The Gopī-bhāva Club”. Based on my research of this situation I learned that many false accusations were made about this group by the GBC and consequently Śrīla Prabhupāda became very upset.

During the intense exchanges that resulted from discussing this situation, Śrīla Prabhupāda made an emphatic statement, “First deserve, then desire!” He was referring to aspiring for the *bhāva* of the *gopīs* when one is not yet qualified and does not understand the process, which of course applied to all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples at that time.

Here is a short excerpt from one of the conversations that took place during the incident.

Rāmeśvara: This is one of the main ideas in their philosophy, that the living entity can desire to have any relationship he wants with Kṛṣṇa.

[Note: These devotees read that directly in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, i.e., it was not, “their philosophy”. Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms that it is true.]

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That's all right, he can desire. I already explained: first deserve, then desire. You are rascal, how you can desire? You have no qualification, you desire to be High Court judge. What is this nonsense?

Śrīla Prabhupāda was understandably quite disturbed because he rightly feared this was premature, given his disciples' utter lack of *adhikāra*. And it could destroy the movement if left unchecked. Keep in mind that these devotees were only studying Śrīla Prabhupāda's new *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and he made it clear in another conversation that wasn't a problem. He just wanted to make sure they were studying systematically from the beginning and not moving forward into deeper topics before they were qualified.

Not surprisingly, since then, many devotees indiscriminately use that statement – first deserve, then desire – as a catch phrase to admonish people, implying that no one should ever think they deserve to desire such exalted goals, nor should anyone dare to venture beyond the basics. Being intimidated by Śrīla Prabhupāda's strong warnings, many devotees have a fearful reluctance to explore or even consider these sorts of desires because there is a prevailing worry about the stigma of being labelled a '*sahajiyā*' – the dreaded "S" word.

All that being said, for those who have been practicing *bhakti* for many decades, the simple fact is that if one does not strive to reorient their desires towards having a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*, then one is missing the greatest opportunity and gift given only by Lord Caitanya, and brought to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

So the first order of business for serious devotees is to "learn" about *rāgānuga-bhakti* so one has a proper understanding of that process. Thus, one can also determine their current position on the path, as well as what one must do to become qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti* with genuine, intense "deserved desires".

Based on what we've just reviewed in the previous sections about *rāgānuga-bhakti* and everything related, there is no doubt whatsoever that every serious devotee *deserves to desire* to become qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which is the only means to attain *prema-bhakti*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda most certainly wanted that for his disciples. No question about it. Especially now, after his disciples have been on the path of *bhakti* for over fifty years and are on the threshold of death. If not now – when?

Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture, *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 1.2.33, Vrindavan, 11.12.1972.

...This is apprenticeship. Vaidhī-bhakti, that is apprenticeship. Real bhakti, parā-bhakti, that is rāgānuga-bhakti. This rāgānuga-bhakti, we have to come to after surpassing the vaidhī-bhakti.

...But if we stick to the śāstric process only and do not try to improve ourself... The śāstric process is kaniṣṭhā-adhikāra, the lowest stage of devotional service.

...This is nice beginning, but one has to go above this.

...If I become satisfied only with these regulative principles for worshiping the Deity in the temple and following the regulative principles daily, but if I have no other idea, then

sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ. Prākṛta means on the material platform. Such devotee can fall down at any moment, because he's on the prākṛta stage.

...So any devotee can fall down if he remains *prākṛta-bhakta*. So he has to raise himself above this to the *madhyama-adhikāra*.

There was nothing ambiguous about Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements in that lecture from 1972, early in the movement. He was encouraging his disciples to not become complacent and thus stagnate, thinking they are properly situated just by following basic rules, regulations and four prohibitions and nothing more. He explained that mentality to be on the precarious material platform – *prākṛta-bhakta*. There are many examples of devotees who fell down because of remaining on this lower stage of progress.

Now let's clarify precisely what “deserving” actually means in this context. Deserving means that one does not have ulterior or unfavorable motives for engaging in *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa – *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ*. And one is engaged in service to Kṛṣṇa favorably, to please Him.

In addition, one also takes the time to learn what the process (*abhidheya*) is so one can proceed sincerely with understanding, confidence, and internal guidance. In other words, one becomes properly qualified – deserving.

Here is a very important related point that many devotees do not understand. Although *anartha-nivṛtti* is listed before *niṣṭhā* in the sequence of progressive stages on the path of *bhakti*, that does not mean “all” *anarthas* must be eradicated before one can attain *niṣṭhā*. None of the *ācāryas* teach that and neither did Śrīla Prabhupāda. Yet many devotees still misunderstand this simple fact.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this in these *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* class excerpts:

When *anartha-nivṛttiḥ* syāt, all unwanted things are finished, at that time, *niṣṭhā*, firm faith. So *bhagavaty uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*. So, so long there are dirty things, our faith and devotion in Kṛṣṇa is not very fixed up, sometimes we deviate, we go away. But then *naṣṭa-prāyeṣu*, when seventy-five percent of the dirty things are cleansed, then our faith in God becomes fixed up. *Bhagavaty uttama-śloke*. (SB, 1.2.12, Los Angeles, 8.21.1972)

If all the unwanted things are vanquished, then you'll have firm faith. *Bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*. *Nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā, naṣṭa-prāyeṣu abhadreṣu...* *Naṣṭa* [SB 1.2.18]. Not that I am completely free from all sinful activities, but *prāyeṣu*, say, fifty percent, sixty percent is gone. At that time, *naṣṭa-prāyeṣu abhadreṣu*... How it has come to take place? *Nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā*.

So *naṣṭa-prāyeṣu abhadreṣu nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā* [SB 1.2.18]. Not all cleansed, but *praya*, say, seventy-five percent cleansed. At that time, you become fixed-up in devotional service, *naiṣṭhikī*. There are different stages of devotional service. That I have explained

several times. First of all, *śraddhā*, *sādhū-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriya*, *anartha-nivṛttiḥ* syāt. (SB, 1.2.12, Vṛndāvana, 10.23.1972)

In actual fact, according to Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in *Mādhurya-kaṇḍambinī*, Chapter 3, freedom from “all” *anarthas* is only possible at the stage of *prema-bhakti*.

Four types of *anarthas* have been mentioned, namely those arising from...

- (1) previous sinful activity
- (2) previous pious activity
- (3) *nāma aparādha*
- (4) cultivation of *bhakti*

They have five grades of *anartha nivṛtti* (nullification):

- (1) limited to one *anartha*
- (2) affecting many *anarthas*
- (3) almost complete
- (4) complete
- (5) absolute

...By continued practice, with the appearance of *niṣṭhā*, the eradication is pervasive (affecting many *anarthas*).

With the appearance of *rati* or *bhāva*, the eradication is almost complete.

With the appearance of *prema*, the eradication is complete.

With the attainment of the Lord's association, the eradication is absolute, with no possibility of their reappearance.

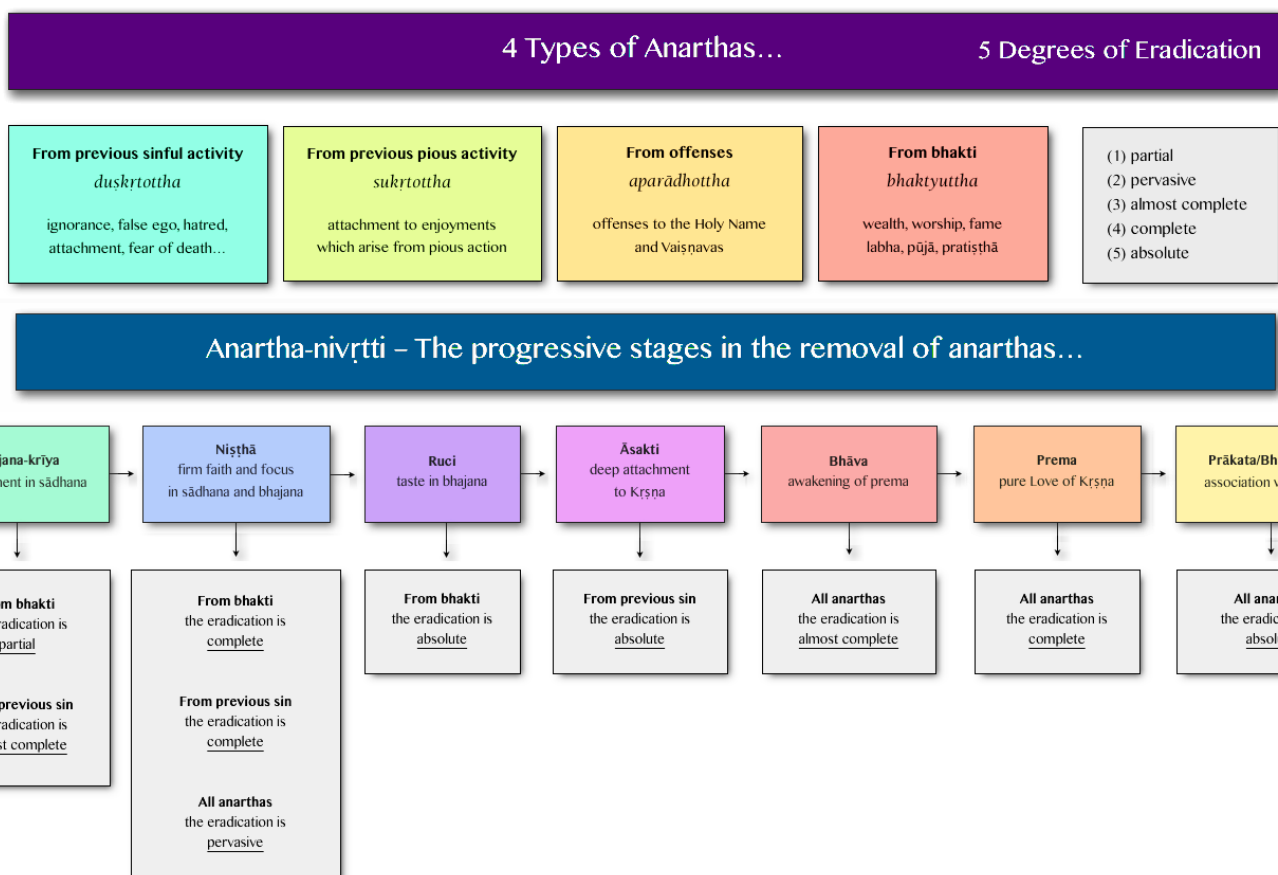
The flow chart on the next page is based on Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's presentation, which will help devotees understand exactly what the different types of *anarthas* are, and how they are removed gradually throughout the progressive stages of *bhakti*.

To make this point about *anartha-nivṛtti* even more clear, here is a reference from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, in the chapter on *Bhāva-bhakti*, where Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that there still may be serious *anarthas* exhibited by a devotee who has attained that exalted stage.

If some apparent fault is seen in a person who has developed real *bhāva*, one should not be hostile to him, because he has accomplished the goal in all respects. BRS, 1.3.59

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

There may be some external bad conduct, but one should not be hostile to him, because by having *bhāva* the person cannot be contaminated by those external actions. Thus, it is said:



apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣaṁ sa bāhyābhyantara-śuciḥ

Whether one is pure or contaminated, and regardless of one's external situation, simply, by remembering the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, one can cleanse one's internal and external existence. *Garuḍa Purāṇa*

This person cannot be criticized, because he has accomplished the goal – he has attained *bhāva*.

Thus, it is said in the Narasimha Purāṇa: A person who is dedicated completely to the Lord may show, externally, serious contamination (but internally he is pure). The full moon, though marked by the figure of a rabbit, is never overcome by darkness. BRS, 1.3.60

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

A person may show serious contamination. This means that it is seen externally that he performs forbidden activities. However, he shines with internal *bhakti*, which cannot be defeated by anyone (he is incomparable).

A particular case, the moon, is introduced to support the general principle. This is called *arthāntara-nyāsa*. In the *Hari-vamśa*, it is said: *loke cchāyā-mayaṁ lakṣma tavāṅke śaśa-samjñitam*: the dark spot on the moon is called a rabbit. Though there is a fault in the beauty of the moon, that fault is only superficial.

These last references reveal that “purity” is not what many devotees assume it to be. One who has attained *bhāva-bhakti* has attained a “ray of *prema*” and yet, even that person may still exhibit “serious contamination”, or “external bad conduct”. But that devotee is said to be beyond criticism because of their having attained the goal of *sādhana - bhāva-bhakti - the sadhya*.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Chapter 3, there are descriptions of the exalted symptoms of one who has attained *bhāva-bhakti*, and thus, it is understood that the presence of serious *anarthas* would be considered the exception and not the norm for those on the platform of *bhāva-bhakti*. Still, Rūpa Gosvāmī felt it was important to make these points. It certainly helps to clarify and expand one’s understanding of these stages and their related aspects.

This also proves the point about the gradual eradication of *anarthas* and it establishes conclusively that one does not have to be free from “all” *anarthas* to attain *niṣṭhā*, or even *bhāva-bhakti* in some rare cases.

However, as Śrīla Prabhupāda indicated in the above lectures, one cannot attain *niṣṭhā* until one has become significantly free of major *anarthas*, i.e., those *anarthas* that represent serious impediments to one’s progress. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura confirms this in *Mādhurya-kaḍambinī*:

The words *naṣṭa-prāyeṣu abhadreṣu* (inauspiciousness is almost destroyed, SB, 1.2.18) means at the stage of *niṣṭhā*, only a small portion of *anarthas* remains.

...At that time being completely free from the influences of *tama* and *rāja guṇa*, such as lust, greed and other impurities, the heart is satisfied in a state of goodness. SB, 1.2.19

Here the word *ca* is used in its collective sense to refer to all of these unwanted qualities. Thus in the stage of *niṣṭhā* the modes of ignorance and passion are no longer present. However, the words *etair anāviddham* (no longer affected by these) indicate that these impurities are still present to some slight degree at the stage of *niṣṭhā*, but do not act as an obstacle to *bhakti*.

Having reviewed all of these considerations, there is a very important and serious point to understand. What is the position of Vaiṣṇavas who have engaged in deviant criminal

behavior, including horrific abuses of all types against Vaiṣṇava children, and sometimes in the Holy *Dhāmas*? Are they included in the above descriptions from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* about *anarthas* at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*?

Absolutely not. Why not? Because they have not attained *bhāva-bhakti*, which is utterly impossible for those who have perpetrated egregious Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*, and without proper reconciliation, which applies to the specific cases I'm referring to. Also, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.30, *api cet sudarācaro*, does not apply in the case of serious unresolved Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*. Jīva Gosvāmī explains the seriousness of Vaiṣṇava *aparādha* when discussing the ten offenses to the Holy Names in *Bhakti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 265.

From the first offense, “To criticize the devotees of Bhagavān is a grievous offense against the name,” it is evident that to commit physical violence towards a devotee is so offensive that it cannot be described in words.

Anartha-nivṛtti does not directly cause the development of *bhakti* or *prema*. Just like avoiding eating meat doesn't produce *bhakti*, otherwise all vegetarians would develop *bhakti*. The same applies to illicit sex and intoxication, etc. Avoiding those activities doesn't produce *bhakti*. They are simply prohibitions – not *aṅgas* of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Anartha-nivṛtti just means the removal of impediments to one's progress. The causes of the development and manifestation of *bhakti* and *prema* are one's desires and the growing intensity of one's attachment (*āśakti*) to Kṛṣṇa, which is reinforced and accelerated by *sādhana-bhakti* and association with advanced Vaiṣṇavas on the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

So the question is: what is “pure *bhakti*” if it doesn't mean one is 100% pure with no *anarthas* whatsoever?

In the first chapter of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī discusses pure *bhakti* (*uttama-bhakti*), specifically as it relates to practitioners (*sādhakas*), i.e., not *prema-bhakti*. He explains that it means a favorable service mood towards Kṛṣṇa, without mixing unrelated desires, which indicates that those desires may still be present, since this is discussing *bhakti* in the stage of “practice”. From *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam |
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā ||

The highest *bhakti* (*bhaktir uttama*) is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts. BRS, 1.1.11

There are eight pages of commentary for this verse by Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura wherein they go into great detail about each word or phrase in that verse describing the attributes of *uttama-bhakti*. Interestingly, there is not one sentence stating that

one must first be completely free from “all” *anarthas*, or it is not the highest *bhakti*. Freedom from all *anarthas* is not one of the criteria for one’s *bhakti* to be considered pure, or the highest quality. Most devotees still don’t properly comprehend this basic truth.

Every devotee who is engaged in the process of *sādhana-bhakti* still has material desires. That is an obvious fact. However, if one is engaging in *bhakti* as a means to fulfill any of those material desires then it is not “pure” *bhakti* – it is “mixed” *bhakti*. There are many varieties and levels of mixed *bhakti* and they are described and named by Jīva Gosvāmī in *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

On the other hand, if one is not engaged in *bhakti* to acquire material things, like worship, prestige, followers, wealth, power, *jñāna*, or *mukti*, and if one’s service to Kṛṣṇa is done with an honest and favorable mindset, then their *bhakti* is considered pure – in its motives and intentions – *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*.

Thus, the purity of one’s *bhakti* refers to the nature and quality of one’s intentions and motives, and not one’s current conditioned status. In other words, one can have pure motives and intentions regarding one’s pursuit of *bhakti*, in spite of the presence of existing *anarthas* and related desires. The correct understanding of this essential point will resolve a lot of confusion, anxiety and guilt for many devotees.

Here is another key point. In the above verse, the phrase, “devoid of desires” means that one’s performance of *bhakti* is not being done for the purpose of fulfilling material desires or desires for *jñāna* or *mukti*, i.e., it is *devoid* of those particular desires as one’s motive. It does not mean one is completely devoid of all material desires. None of the *ācāryas* teach that because that is patently impossible during the stage of practice – *sādhana-bhakti*.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī and Jīva Gosvāmī explain how detachment from material desires gradually and automatically manifests during the course of one’s progress, without having to engage in severe austerities or renunciation.

If a person has a taste for worshipping the Lord, even if he has strong material attractions, those attractions will be for the most part destroyed during *sādhana* without resorting to *vairāgya*.²¹ BRS, 1.2.254

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Previously, *vairāgya* was condemned at the beginning of *bhakti* because it causes the heart to become hard. However, if *vairāgya* is forbidden, the person practicing *bhakti* will be filled with material desires, and having such desires is against the scriptures, for it is said:

The person absorbed in material enjoyment is far from being absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. How can a person going east catch an object moving to the west? *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

²¹ The path of renunciation and austerities.

To answer this dilemma, the author (Rūpa Gosvāmī) supplies this verse. Having a taste for bhakti will destroy the attachment to material objects. Thus, the hardness of heart caused by practice of vairāgya will not take place, and still detachment will manifest.

At the stage of ruci or taste for bhakti, material attraction will be destroyed for the most part. The meaning is that it will be completely destroyed with the maturation of bhakti.

One final and essential consideration regarding desires. There is no question of being completely freed from material desires unless and until one's mind is immersed in spiritual desires, specifically in connection with having a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā* and everything associated with that. Vaiṣṇavas are not impersonalist *yogīs* who make futile attempts to purge all material desires and become “desireless”.

That is technically impossible, since the *jīva*'s nature is that desires flow forth endlessly – like rivers into the sea. The process of *bhakti* is designed to inspire and teach one how to “replace” material desires – not “artificially repress” them (*phalgu-vairāgya*), as indicated in the reference above. Artificial repression of material desires never works and usually ends in unnecessary disturbances for oneself and others.

To summarize the above key points, it is clear that attaining the stage of *niṣṭhā*, steadiness in *bhakti*, means that the major portion of *anartha-nivṛtti* has taken place. That is accomplished by engaging one's senses in the *aṅgas* of *sādhana-bhakti* as much as possible, and by regulating all other sense activities to establish a healthy balance, using common sense. That sensible approach will help to minimize disruptions to one's ongoing spiritual endeavors. Thus, one can more readily pursue those activities that directly nourish their *bhakti* with less unwanted diversions.

The key is to understand that the path of *bhakti* is a positive one, i.e., the focus is not on negating *anarthas* and following prohibitions, but on proactively developing one's *bhakti*, *prīti*, and attachment for Kṛṣṇa, which automatically results in gradual *anartha-nivṛtti* as explained in the reference above from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (BRS, 1.2.254).

Having examined this detailed analysis of *anartha-nivṛtti* and *uttama-bhakti*, as well as the earlier summary presentation of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, we can now readily harmonize several of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements related to *rāgānuga-bhakti* with what we have just learned from these *ācāryas*.

Nectar of Devotion is Śrīla Prabhupāda's summary of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and therein, Śrīla Prabhupāda made very strong statements regarding the eligibility for *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which appear to be somewhat contradictory to what the previous *ācāryas* have presented.

From *Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 16, Eligibility for spontaneous devotional service (*rāgānuga-bhakti*).

Persons desiring to follow in the footsteps of such eternal devotees of the Lord as the Vṛṣṇis and Vṛndāvana denizens are called *rāgānuga* devotees, which means that they are

trying to attain to the perfection of those devotees. These *rāgānuga* devotees do not follow the regulative principles of devotional service very strictly, but by spontaneous nature they become attracted to some of the eternal devotees such as Nanda or Yaśodā, and they try to follow in their footsteps spontaneously. There is a gradual development of the ambition to become like a particular devotee, and this activity is called *rāgānuga*.

We must always remember, however, that such eagerness to follow in the footsteps of the denizens of Vraja (Vṛndāvana) is not possible unless one is freed from material contamination. In following the regulative principles of devotional service, there is a stage called *anartha-nivṛtti*, which means the disappearance of all material contamination.

...When one is actually spontaneously attracted to the loving principles of the gopīs, there will be found no trace of any mundane contamination in his character.

Therefore, in the beginning, everyone should strictly follow the regulative principles of devotional service according to the injunctions of the scriptures and the spiritual master. Only after the stage of liberation from material contamination can one actually aspire to follow in the footsteps of the devotees in Vṛndāvana.

We have just learned from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura that *anartha-nivṛtti* is a gradual process which continues all the way up to *bhāva-bhakti*, and only at the next stage of *prema-bhakti* is one absolutely freed from all *anarthas*. And according to Rūpa Gosvāmī, serious *anarthas* may even be present in a practitioner at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*. In addition, we read Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements about attaining *niṣṭhā* after the reduction of major *anarthas* – not all of them – 50% - 75% reduction was his estimate.

We also learned the full details of the qualifications for practicing *rāgānuga-bhakti* from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the main criterion being intense desire, i.e., greed (*lobha*). There was no indication in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that being “liberated from all material contamination” was one of the qualifications to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti*. That is not even a qualification to practice pure *bhakti*, as we also learned.

Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda's assertions in *Nectar of Devotion* must be understood in the full context of the clear facts presented by these *ācāryas*. To put it succinctly, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not *literally* mean that one must be liberated from material contamination to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Why not? Because liberation from material contamination is *mukti*, the goal of *sādhana*, and nowhere do any *ācāryas* teach that one must first attain *mukti* to be eligible to then “practice” *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which is a *sādhana* to attain freedom from material bondage and a relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Thus, taking the literal meaning makes no sense, and none of the previous *ācāryas* have ever stated that.

Therefore, the only rational explanation is that Śrīla Prabhupāda's intended meaning is that one must be freed from major *anarthas*, not all of them, since that is impossible during the stage of practice (*sādhana*). To blindly assert the literal meaning would be completely illogical

and in contradiction to the *purva ācāryas*, something Śrīla Prabhupāda said he would never do.

Continuing with *Nectar of Devotion*...

It is said by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, “When one is actually liberated from material contamination, he can always remember an eternal devotee in Vṛndāvana in order to love Kṛṣṇa in the same capacity. And developing such an aptitude, one will always live in Vṛndāvana, even within his mind.”

For comparison, here again is that verse by Rūpa Gosvāmī from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Remembering the Vṛndāvana form of Kṛṣṇa and His dear associates who have inclinations for service similar to one’s own, absorbing oneself in hearing topics related to them, one should always live in Vraja. BRS, 1.2.294

Take note that the verse does not state, “When one is actually liberated from material contamination”, because it is not in the Sanskrit of that verse. Nor is it implied, because neither Jīva Gosvāmī or Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura stated anything about being liberated from material contamination in their commentaries to this verse. If that was the case, they most certainly would have commented on that fact. In addition, liberation from material contamination was never stated as part of the qualifying criteria in any of the other verses and commentaries regarding *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

So why did Śrīla Prabhupāda make such strong and restrictive statements about the eligibility for *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which resulted in most disciples feeling that it was practically impossible to attain? Many devotees still maintain that serious misconception.

The first consideration is that *Nectar of Devotion* was written between 1969 and 1970, at the beginning stages of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission, when he was just starting to translate more of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* and eventually other books. He needed this book because it is the handbook for devotional service and its essential components, which was crucial for teaching all the existing disciples and the new ones that were continually joining.

The other key consideration was the status of those disciples. At that point in his mission, the age of his disciples ranged from late teenagers, mainly those in their twenties, to some in their thirties, i.e., *kaniṣṭha* adulthood. Most devotees had only read *Bhagavad-gita* once, maybe twice. Classes were given by other unqualified *kaniṣṭhās* to devotees who could barely stay awake.

Clearly, no disciples then were remotely qualified for *rāgānuga-bhakti*, what to speak of even understanding it properly. We were all just learning to apply the basics of *vaidhī-bhakti*, and elements of fanaticism throughout ISKCON distorted even that endeavor in so many disastrous ways.

Based on the facts that we now know about these details, it is quite clear that Śrīla Prabhupāda presented the qualifications for *rāgānuga-bhakti* in that way as a deterrent of sorts, to ensure that none of his followers would prematurely *desire before deserving*. So he set the bar very high to avoid any potential deviations in those early stages of his mission.

In hindsight, I believe that was a very wise decision on Śrīla Prabhupāda's part, and thus, it should never be considered as an error in his presentation. He was in fact, “erring on the side of caution”, and he was right to do so. This was another example of his wisdom as an expert teacher, making necessary adjustments according to audience, time, and circumstances.

Śrīla Prabhupāda knew full well that those who had the potential to become qualified for *rāgānuga-bhakti* would be guided by Kṛṣṇa when they were ready to study the books of the previous *ācāryas*, and He would arrange for suitable association as well.

Now we'll learn how Kṛṣṇa personally fulfills the *deserved desires* of His devotees in exchanges of loving reciprocation.

Kṛṣṇa Reciprocates According to the Desires of the Devotee

Kṛṣṇa alone has been fulfilling the desires of every *jīva* in both the material worlds and the spiritual worlds from beginningless time – *anādi*. In the material worlds He does so through the agency of *karma*, which He presides over and regulates as Paramātmā. In the spiritual world He fulfills all desires personally according to the *bhakti* and *prema* of the devotee, and the same applies to His devotees in the material worlds.

Here are two related references from the *Brahma-sūtras*, where Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains Kṛṣṇa's exclusive role in giving *karmic* results.

Topic 17 – Giver of Results

Now the Lord as the giver of all results is explained.

...The doubt is this. Do the results like *svarga* come from sacrifice or the Lord?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) The results come from sacrifice because if the person does the act he goes and if he does not do it, he does not go.

The Lord alone gives the results because that is reasonable. BS, 3.2.39

The Lord is the giver of all results like *svarga*. Why? Because that is reasonable. The ability to give results to all acts at all times is suitable for the Lord alone who is eternal, omniscient, endowed with all śaktis, most munificent, and worshipped by sacrifices, etc. And it is not suitable for actions (sacrifices) which are destroyed in a moment and insentient.

...The author states his opinion.

Bādarāyaṇa holds the view that the Lord is the giver of results, since He is designated as the cause of results in scripture. BS, 3.2.42

The word *tu* removes the doubt. Lord Bādarāyaṇa says that the Lord as previously mentioned is the giver of results. Why? Because the Lord is designated as the cause of results in *pūṇyena pūṇyaṁ lokam nayati*, and action disappears on being performed. Scripture states the existence of action and its results (*karma*) depends on the Lord.

The *jīva*'s inherent nature is to desire and then act, being compelled by those desires. That is the foundational working force driving material existence, and the result is an entangled web of interconnected *karma*, so complex that it boggles the mind, and is impossible for anyone to fathom.

Yet Kṛṣṇa, as Paramātmā, observes and remembers every minute detail of each and every *jīva*'s thoughts and actions, including all the *karmic* interconnections with other *jīvas*. And He knows all these complexities in unlimited universes filled with unlimited *jīvas* – all in real time! Let that sink in for a minute. No one else could possibly do that, and then give results that are impartial and appropriate justice.

The working principle from Kṛṣṇa's perspective is explained by Him in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *ye yathā mām prapadyante*.

As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prthā. BG, 4.11

Everyone means even those who have material desires are following His path. From *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*.

After worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, those who are interested in the four principles of religion, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation obtain from Him what they desire. What then is to be said of other benedictions? Indeed, sometimes the Lord gives a spiritual body to such ambitious worshipers. May that Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is unlimitedly merciful, bestow upon me the benediction of liberation from this present danger and from the materialistic way of life. SB, 8.3.19

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

The Lord is also served by devotees with material desires. Those persons having desires for *dharma*, *kāma*, *artha*, and liberation, worshipping the Lord, [eventually] attain the goal of *prema* which is cherished.

The Lord certainly gives desired objects to devotees who request them, but He does not give in such a way that the devotee will ask again after finishing his enjoyment. He gives His lotus feet, which include all desirables, to those worshippers who do not desire them. SB, 5.19.27

He also gives the material objects they desire. He also gives a spiritual body, as He gave to Dhruva and others. Thus He is unlimitedly merciful. May He liberate me [Gajendra] from the crocodile and *samsāra*, and give me a spiritual body and *prema-bhakti*.

It is important to understand that the function of desiring is not inherently bad. However, the objects of one's desires and one's subsequent actions have consequences – either perpetuating the eternal *karmic* cycle, or attaining liberation from that bondage. It's all about our desires. Desires are the core driving force in all situations. The *jīva* cannot be desireless. That is impossible.

It is said in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*: *akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ...*

The person desiring destruction of all desires, the person with all desires, and even the person with an intense desire for liberation, if he has good intelligence, will worship the Supreme Lord with pure *bhakti*. SB, 2.3.10

In all circumstances Kṛṣṇa is the one who is fulfilling everyone's desires, and even a person steeped in material desires is advised to engage in *bhakti* which will gradually remove those *anarthas* and facilitate the development of spiritual desires, leading to liberation and more.

The path of *bhakti* is a scientific process designed to help one develop and focus on spiritual desires for a relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*. Those types of desires are directly fulfilled by Kṛṣṇa personally, unlike those that are fulfilled by Him indirectly through the mechanism of *karma*. The science is simple: desires for material things keep one bound, and desires for spiritual goals free one from bondage.

In *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura summarizes the essence of this science where spiritual desires lead to one's perfection – *prema-bhakti*.

I will always think of the devotional service of the lotus feet of the Divine Pair, and I will always remain attached to that. Whatever I think of during my spiritual practice (*sādhana*) I will attain in my *siddha-deha* when I reach perfection. This is the means of *rāga-bhakti*.

The treasure I desire as a practitioner I will get when I attain my spiritual body (*siddha-deha*); it is just a question of being ripe or unripe. The ripe stage is the stage of pure devotion (*prema-bhakti*), and the unripe stage is the stage of practice (*sādhana-bhakti*). That is the essential truth about devotional principles. PBC, 55-56

Now we'll review references related to how Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with His devotees according to their spiritual desires. From the evidence presented so far, it is clear that one's desires for a

specific relationship with Kṛṣṇa in His *līlā* are not pre-programmed as part of each *jīva*'s *svarūpa*. They are developed by the influence of *sādhū-saṅga* over many lifetimes, all arranged by Kṛṣṇa.

Ultimately though, it is the *jīva*'s personal choice in the exercise of their limited free will, and it is a decision of the utmost importance because it will eventually determine the *jīva*'s personality, identity, and existential reality for eternity, with Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, and all the *vraja-vāsīs*.

Here is another important consideration. As a natural and expected consequence of the exercise of one's free will it is understood that devotees do not achieve the same results. This is due to the different types of desires and levels of intensity that each individual develops in the course of the evolution and maturation of their *bhakti*.

In other words, “going back to Godhead” does not mean that everyone will attain the same exact outcome. Thus, it's not just about going back to Godhead, it's more about how one will be situated and engaged there for eternity.

In *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Sanātana Gosvāmī explains that each devotee attains a different level of success according to their advancement, i.e., the intensity of their *bhakti* and *prīti*.

The disciplines by which devotees in practice can reach Śrī Goloka – those very same disciplines let them see the Lord performing pastimes like those of Gokula, completely satisfied, in *vraja-bhūmi* in the mortal world. BB, 2.5.172

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

To search out the Lord in Gokula, Gopa-kumāra need not go down to the Earth, but he does need to learn the *sādhana*, the special practices, for attaining Kṛṣṇa's personal abode. For intimate associates like Nanda Mahārāja no spiritual practice is needed, because they are eternal *vraja-vāsīs*. But for everyone else, careful endeavor is required.

On this path, not everyone attains the same level of success. A devotee may develop *bhakti* to the point of being able to see Kṛṣṇa but may not be able to see Him busily enjoying the special pastimes of Vṛndāvana with His intimate devotees.

When more advanced, a Vaiṣṇava may occasionally see Kṛṣṇa engaging in His Vṛndāvana pastimes but not displaying the full scope of His blissful enjoyment. And even such a Vaiṣṇava may not be fortunate enough to enter Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes and play with Kṛṣṇa in absolute freedom. The highest perfection of *bhakti* is rarely achieved.

Very sobering words indeed, to be contemplated deeply by every serious devotee. One may then wonder why doesn't Kṛṣṇa give the same results to each devotee, and why doesn't He just give everyone the highest levels of attainment? Sanātana Gosvāmī answers these questions as well in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

Still, the servants of the Lord's incarnations achieve the greatest happiness in the loving services they prefer, each according to his own mood. BB, 2.4.189

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva is the boundless ocean of all super excellent glories, why doesn't every devotee serve Him and Him alone to obtain the highest possible happiness? The answer is that every Vaiṣṇava, no matter what form of Viṣṇu he worships, achieves a special individual happiness, suited exactly to his own attitude, and this completely fulfills his heart's desires. All the Supreme Lord's pure servants know such perfect satisfaction, so they all attain the ultimate limit of happiness available in their own rasas.

The Lord's pastimes expand in unlimited variety. His mind is deeper than millions of oceans. The opulence of His diverse pastimes attracts His devotees to Him in so many ways. Who can understand Him by speculation? BB, 2.4.190

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

But why doesn't the Lord bestow the very best method of worship upon all His devotees? After all, He is Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses, who inspires all the energies of knowledge and activity. If He wanted to bestow the very best method, He could, but He chooses instead to respond to the individual taste of each devotee for a particular loving service.

This variety of reciprocation with many different devotees is His līlā and His special greatness. How can anyone presume to understand why He acts as He does? We can understand only this much: Were He not to expand varieties of pastimes with various devotees, the charm of His variegated enjoyment would not be complete.

Even amidst such diverseness the Lord's mercy achieves its highest perfection, for despite the hierarchy of greater and lesser devotees, none are affected by envy or by any such bad feelings toward others. Each devotee, following his own nature, attains the final limit of happiness in the service that suits his own taste. BB, 2.4.191

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

That the Supreme Lord does not behave the same with every devotee does not invalidate the glory of His boundless compassion. Rather, His discriminating dealings with His servants enhance His reputation because every devotee relishes the highest possible happiness.

By the nature of devotional service, none of the Lord's servants ever become dissatisfied. In the heavenly realms and elsewhere in the material world, inequality always leads to conflict and envy, but not so in the dealings between the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

Rivalry, jealousy, and other undesirable emotions never interfere with their happiness. Devotees on the path of pure devotional service are protected from these inauspicious influences, including false pride and malice towards others. Vaiṣṇavas are naturally friendly to one another. Free from envy, they can peacefully pursue their real self-interests.

Take note that Sanātana Gosvāmī didn't state or imply that "following his own nature" means it is an inherent aspect of their *svarūpa*. And this last paragraph is more conclusive proof that there is no question of turning away from Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world or acting inappropriately in any way. This is all about Kṛṣṇa responding to the desires of each devotee.

In *Prīti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 96, Śrī Jīva confirms that Kṛṣṇa appears according to the devotee's desires as expressed in their worship and *sādhana*.

And the Lord says:

All those hundreds of thousands of *gopīs*, desiring Me, the supreme Brahman, not knowing My form of power, attained Me, a lover who gave them pleasure because of association. SB, 11.12.13

One cannot say the *gopīs* were ignorant. They had the highest knowledge of Bhagavān with sweetness since they did not absorb their minds in anything else. He is pleasure for the *ātmārāmas*. All forms of Bhagavān are not worshipped or realized by all. Each form is attained only by qualified persons since He is infinite in form and not suitable for all. In *Vedānta-sūtras* it is established that one can take qualities of the Lord mentioned in different scriptures in order to know a particular form.

Therefore it is said: A person worships a particular form of the Lord according to his choice. One can gather qualities of that form from different scriptures.

In the commentary on SB, 10.43.17 it is said, "The Lord who is a form of all *rasas* manifests according to individual desire. He does not reveal all forms to all." This means that persons who know the supreme truth do not have all knowledge. That is reasonable since such a person does not realize the special sweet qualities of the Lord.

However, the realizers of the Lord's sweetness will realize all knowledge about the Lord according to the circumstance, though all knowledge is not of much interest to them (preferring only the sweetness).

In his commentary on the *Brahmā-saṁhitā*, Jīva Gosvāmī gives an elaborate explanation of how Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with each devotee according to their individual desires for a specific type of relationship with Him. And Kṛṣṇa even reciprocates in unexpected ways with those who express hatred and enmity towards Him, including trying to kill Him! From *Brahmā-saṁhitā*.

Those who contemplate Him with feelings of lust, anger, the natural intimacy of friendship, fear, parental affection, bewilderment, reverence and servitude, attain bodies (suitable for associates of Bhagavān) with various degrees of beauty and qualities corresponding to their individual meditations. I worship that original personality, Govinda. BrS, 55

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only actual bestower of results; He bestows the appropriate fruits upon all. The results bestowed by others are perishable, but the fruit bestowed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa is never subject to destruction. Bhagavān is eternal, His devotees are eternal, and His *bhakti* and the fruit of *bhakti* are also eternal.

Because pure devotees are full of deep attachment for Him, they are infinitely superior to the desireless *yogīs*. That *Prabhu* who bestows even upon His most antagonistic enemies a result that is supremely difficult for great *yogīs* to attain must necessarily, according to the logic of inferential partial illustration, bestow the highest fruit of all upon His devotees who incessantly cultivate favorable activities and moods in His service. This is certainly not a point of controversy.

...Aside from that, those who have the sentiments of *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *śṛṅgāra* attain bodies appropriate for those individual *bhāvas*, with beauty and qualities corresponding to the extent of their attainment.

...Thus the words *sadṛśīm tanum* indicate that one can attain a body suitable for an associate of Bhagavān, which is partially imbued with His transcendental qualities.

...Śrī Nārada has also stated, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.6.29:

prayujyamāne mayi tām śuddhām bhagavatīm tanum: When my devotional service was mature, Bhagavān mercifully bestowed upon me my pure body as His associate. My previous body composed of the five gross material elements was cast aside and I went to the abode of Bhagavān in that transcendental body.

...One can attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa by being absorbed in anger, hostility, or envy, or also through the moods of *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *śṛṅgāra*. However, just as there is a difference between hostility and loving attachment, there is also a difference in the destinations attained through these respective moods.

The *sādhakas* attain the positions of being different types of associates in accordance with the level of their *prema* or *anurāga* (deep attachment). The highest attainment is only achieved by those with the highest loving attachment.

It is very clear that one's results are not dependent on externally following rules and regulations strictly. Rather, what one attains is solely dependent upon the depth and intensity of one's *bhakti* and attachment to Kṛṣṇa in the context of a desired spiritual relationship. As

we have seen, this point has been emphasized repeatedly by all of these *ācāryas*. Also take note that Jīva Gosvāmī did not say that one achieves predetermined results according to what is inherent in their *svarūpa*.

Astonishingly, even focusing one's mind on Kṛṣṇa in a negative mood can yield positive results. I've left out specifics in the above commentary regarding the results attained by the *asuras*, and instead, I've presented them later in a more appropriate section: ***Demons Attain Various Destinations***.

Here are more references from the *Brahma-sūtras* further supporting the principle that Kṛṣṇa responds to the devotee's desires. And seeing Kṛṣṇa does not automatically guarantee liberation.

Topic 27 – Difference in Knowledge and Worship

There is a doubt concerning the passage *yathā kratur asmin loke purṣo bhavati tatheyah pretya bhavati*: just as according to faith a man becomes what he is in this life, so after death he becomes according to that faith. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1)

Does a person get results according to the degree of intensity of his worship of Brahman along with worship of *guru*?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) Since one does not hear about differences in results in statements like *nirañjanaḥ param samyam upaiti*: the pure person attains the Lord with similarity (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.3), the intensity in *sādhana* is not a cause of the type of result. One cannot say that people going to a city by various paths see different cities.

Just as there is difference in knowledge, there is difference in the worshipper and the result. That was stated in the scripture quoted. BS, 3.3.52

In the passage *viññāya prajñam kūrvīta*: knowing the Lord one should practice knowledge, one sees two types of knowledge. One is based on sound (teachings) and the other is based on worship. There is a difference. Similarly, one will see different types of worshippers.

In the passage quoted, the difference is stated. **One sees the Lord according to the type of worship and then attains liberation of that type.** The similarity to the Lord is according to the purity of the person.

”Let that be. You have said earlier that one cannot see the Lord without *vidyā* and one cannot have liberation without seeing the Lord. Both of these statements are incorrect because one can see the Lord without *vidyā*, when the Lord makes His appearance as *avatāra* and those who thus see Him do not get liberation.”

This is not true. From seeing the Lord in a general way one does not get liberation, just as dying does not give liberation. One attains a higher [realm] by seeing the Lord without *bhakti*. This is not liberation. BS, 3.3.53

The word *api* expresses limitation. Seeing the Lord in a general way does not cause liberation, just as dying is not the cause of liberation. What is the result of seeing the Lord (without *bhakti*)? By seeing Him in a general way, one attains a higher [realm], as did the Vidyādhara Sudarṣana or King Nṛga.

"Going to a higher [realm] is liberation." No, it is only elevation to a higher [realm]. Smṛtis confirm this: from seeing the Lord in a general way one goes to a higher [realm] and from seeing him with qualification one attains liberation. (*Nārāyaṇa-tantra*).

The meaning is this. Seeing the Lord is of two types: where the Lord is covered and where the Lord is not covered. The first type arises by great piety and by its influence it makes one attain [realms] like *svarga*.

The second type, arising by making the Lord filled with knowledge and bliss one's dearest love, causes liberation on destroying the body by *brahma-vidyā*. Thus everything is resolved.

They say that some attained liberation by seeing the Lord when they were killed by him. This was caused by the destruction of their body by the power of the touch of His *cakra*. When their subtle body is thus destroyed, their attitude towards the Lord instantly changes from hatred towards affection. Consequently, at the moment of death they see the Lord with affection and thereby attain liberation.

Thus one should understand that the cause of liberation is seeing Him with affection. Otherwise there would be contradiction to many scriptural statements.

It is said in *śāstra* that Kṛṣṇa chooses to reveal Himself to a devotee. In other words, the path of *bhakti* is not mechanical because it ultimately depends on attracting Kṛṣṇa to the point where He feels compelled to reveal Himself due to His attraction to the devotee's *bhakti*. This point is discussed in the following *sūtras*.

Topic 28 – Choosing the Devotee For His *Bhakti*

Now begins confirmation of the fact that by seeing the Lord through *vidyā* one attains liberation. It is said in *Muṇḍaka* (2.2.23) and *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3.2.3):

The Lord is not attained by speaking, by intelligence or by hearing. He is attained by the person whom He chooses. The Lord shows His form to him.

The doubt is this. Does seeing the Lord arise from the Lord choosing the person or from the person's *bhakti* along with detachment from wealth?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) It arises from the Lord's choosing since that is the direct meaning of the words.

The words indicating that the Lord chooses the person to whom He will reveal Himself mean that He chooses the person because of that person's *bhakti*. The Lord's choice is mentioned as the only cause because it is most important cause. BS, 3.3.54

The words indicating that the Lord shows Himself only to the person He chooses means that He reveals Himself because of a person's *bhakti*. This is understood from the next verse and other statements as well. Thus the verses do not indicate that only by the Lord's choosing is He revealed. It is said in the next verse in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*:

The Lord is not attained by weakness of *bhakti*, uncontrolled senses, or austerity unsanctioned by scriptures. The Lord, or *brahma-dhāma* appears to the wise man who endeavors by these methods of strong *bhakti*, controlled senses and approved austerity.

Etair upāyaiḥ means by strong *bhakti*, controlled senses and approved austerity. *Bala* means *bhakti*. The following statements give the same conclusion:

Just as a chaste wife controls her husband, My devotees control Me. SB, 9.4.66

The Supreme Lord is obtained by pure *bhakti*. BG 8.22

The next verse in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: A person who has not given up bad activities, who is disturbed, who has not controlled his senses, and who has not controlled his mind cannot attain the Lord by his knowledge. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.24

In this verse the *sādhana* is described: one who meditates on the Lord while having proper conduct and sense control realizes the Lord. Thus, because of this later statement, it is understood that the Lord chooses a person because of his *bhakti*. The first verse states that the Lord is attained only by the Lord's choice. The Lord chooses the person He loves, not someone He does not love. He loves those who are devoted to Him, not those who are without devotion.

The Lord Himself says:

Of these four types, the *jñānī*, who is constantly engaged in thinking of Me, who is practicing pure *bhakti*, is the best. This *jñānī* loves only Me, and I love only him. BG, 7.17

It is also said elsewhere *śraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avehi*: know the Lord through faith, *bhakti*, meditation, and *yoga*. (*Kaivalya Upaniṣad* 2) To say that the Lord reveals Himself only by His choice is contrary to these statements. It would admit prejudice on the part of the Lord as well.

"But why does the verse say only by the Lord's choice is He attained?" It is because of the greatness of the Lord's choosing to whom He will reveal Himself. The word *tu* indicates

“only”. Because of being the immediate cause, it is indicated as most important. There is a sequence. Because of the person being dear by performance of *bhakti*, the person is chosen. Then the Lord reveals Himself.

Topic 30 – The Lord Appears According to the Devotee's *Bhāva*

In statements like *yathā kratuḥ* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1) worship of the Lord with sweet and majestic qualities was described. Taking association of devotees with these *bhāvas*, by the will of the Lord, the *jīvas* develop inclinations to either sweet or majestic qualities of the Lord, and then attain the Lord and see the form endowed with those particular qualities. This was shown in *sūtra* 3.3.29.

The doubt is this. Does a person attain the form with the qualities which he meditated upon by his worship or does he attain a form with additional qualities?

(*Pūrva-pakṣa*) Since the object of either type of meditation is ultimately one, he will attain a form with all the qualities.

The devotee does not see the Lord with other qualities, because the Lord responds to the *bhāva* of the devotee, just as knowledge of one form brings realization of that particular form. BS, 3.3.56

The word *tu* destroys the doubt. The form realized is not one with additional qualities. Why? Because the Lord has the quality of revealing a form with the qualities corresponding to those employed by the meditator. What was indicated in the meditation will be attained in liberation. Having known an object in a particular way and meditating on it, one sees that particular object in liberation.

Though the knowers of the Lord are aware that the Lord has other qualities, those other qualities do not manifest when they see the Lord, since they did not meditate on those qualities. In this way there is no contradiction to the statement *yathā kratuḥ*.

By the will of the Lord, persons develop particular inclinations and by those inclinations they attain a particular form of the Lord. That is shown by an example.

Priests are assigned to certain roles and cannot perform all the actions of all the Vedas, because those roles employ particular Vedas. BS, 3.3.57

The sponsor restricts all the priests in performing parts of the sacrifice to certain assigned activities. *Avabaddhāḥ* means these persons are given certain names. "I select you to be the *adhvaryu*. I select you to be the *hotṛ*. I select you to be the *udgātṛ*." Though they are qualified to perform all parts of the sacrifice, because of the assigned roles, they are qualified for one role, not all. This is the rule.

...Just as the will of the sponsor determines the particular action of the priests with difference in donation at the end, so the will of the Lord determines the particular worship of the jīvas with different forms of the Lord at the end.

Being dissatisfied with seeing the mixed *bhāva* of Uddhava and others, the author speaks another teaching.

The Lord's will to invoke different moods in different devotees is like a *mantra* which is used in different ways. Thus there is no contradiction in the Lord's will. BS, 3.3.58

The will of the Lord to bring about *bhakti* to a particular form of the Lord is like a *mantra*. Just as one *mantra* is used in a variety of actions, another *mantra* is employed in two acts only and another *mantra* is employed in one act only, so the Lord wills some *jīvas* to worship in several modes and others in one mode. The word *ādi* indicates that time and *karma* act in various ways like *mantras*. One time is the cause of flowers and leaves at a certain time, of no leaves at another time, of infancy at a certain time and youth at another time.

Thus there is no contradiction. Since the particular form with its particular qualities which was worshipped in *sādhana* manifests directly with those qualities in liberation, it is not a fact that one realizes qualities beyond what one used in meditation.

In these last commentaries by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Kṛṣṇa's “will” should not be misunderstood as Kṛṣṇa *forcing* the devotee to worship Him according to His preferences only. Kṛṣṇa does not impose Himself like that. That should be more than clear based on all the references we’ve reviewed so far regarding Kṛṣṇa's fulfilling each devotee’s specific desires, which are based on *their* preferences.

These statements are an indication of Kṛṣṇa's participatory role in the development of the devotee’s desires for a particular relationship, with *sādhū-saṅga* being the third factor as mentioned before in the Section discussing how a *jīva*’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa is developed. Kṛṣṇa's involvement is based solely on how the devotee approaches Him as He has indicated many times.

In any loving relationship two wills are interacting – giving and receiving – and although Kṛṣṇa's will is supreme, these statements do not mean Kṛṣṇa completely dominates each *jīva* and imposes His will and preferences on the *jīvas*. Kṛṣṇa has stated repeatedly that He “reciprocates” according to each devotee’s mood and desires.

In other words, we read that Kṛṣṇa inspires the devotee in various ways according to the devotee’s evolving desires, but the devotee is the one who first begins the relationship and Kṛṣṇa responds accordingly. This is the foundational basis for attaining *prema-bhakti*, and we have examined numerous references from various sources which confirm this conclusively.

Ye yathā mām prapadyante....

To end this section, here is a relevant and revealing reference from Srila Prabhupada from his original Indian publication of Back to Godhead, Vol. 3, Part 17, April 15, 1960 (before ISKCON).

The servitor living being, if at all he wants to relish any of the above [primary] rasas, must reciprocate the same with Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is the unlimited ocean or source of all rasas. One can derive any amount of rasa of a particular type from that resource simply by such reciprocation with Kṛṣṇa.

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad directs therefore conclusively that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Fountain-Head of all the rasas which is also confirmed by the Śrutis or the Vedas. One should therefore always meditate upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa to derive a particular type of rasa, according to one's choice and under proper direction of the spiritual master.

Additional Considerations

Liberation Via the Path of the Devatās

In the *Brahma-sūtras*, the first three Sections of Chapter Four describe how some *jīvan-muktas* attain final *mukti* via the path of the *devatās*, i.e., following the rays of the Sun and with the help of other *devatās*. Those are descriptions of *jīvan-muktas* who are focused on attaining Brahman, and that is not the process devotees will undergo in their attainment of *prema-bhakti*.

However, those *jīvan-muktas* first ascend to Lord Brahmā's realm and once there they may develop *bhakti* in the association of the Vaiṣṇavas there, and thus, attain Vaikuṇṭha after the final annihilation (*pralaya*).

Those details are not relevant to this treatise since they are not part of the focus. Interested readers can examine those details in the *Brahma-sūtras*.

Liberated Devatās

We read in the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* about the different levels of *jīvan-muktas*, some of whom are demigods (*devatās*) who hold administrative posts regarding the affairs of universal management. Their unique position is explained in the *Brahma-sūtras*.

The *jīvas* holding posts in the universe remain as long as their term lasts (and later they attain liberation). BS, 3.3.33

We do not say that all those knowers of Brahman become liberated with perfection of knowledge. Those who have perfected knowledge, who have destroyed accumulated *karmas* of acts in past lives (*aprārabdha*) by knowledge, who have dissolved *karmas* produced by their present bodies (*kriyamāna*) by knowledge and have destroyed the present body attained by *karma* (*prārabdha*) by enjoying it, attain liberation.

But Brahmā and others, who hold positions, though they have destroyed or dissolved accumulated (*aprārabdha*) and present *karmas* (*kriyamāna*), remain in the material world as long as their *karma* which has given them this position (*prārabdha*) is not destroyed. At the completion of those *karmas* which have started in this life, they become liberated and enter the supreme abode.

This should be understood. Those like Indra who have shorter periods of office, after their term is finished, go to Brahmā who holds office for longer. At the end of Brahmā's term, when he is liberated, they are liberated with him. This will be stated in *sūtra* 4.3.10.

When they act against the Lord, that is simply following the Lord's desire for nourishing His pastimes. It is not a fault on their part. Though they appear to be attached to material enjoyment, that is only a show, for they are fixed in knowledge of the Lord. Thus except for those holding posts, other knowers of the truth on knowing the Lord attain liberation. There is no doubt.

Regarding the *karma* of the *devatās*, in the 5th Canto of *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, we learn that *karma* is only generated in Bhārata-varṣa, i.e., our known Earth, not just India. That's why it is also called *karma-bhūmi*. The complete Earth is Bhu-maṇḍala, which is just short of four billion miles in diameter. Bhārata-varṣa is very tiny in comparison. Interestingly, the four yugas only cycle in Bhārata-varṣa – not anywhere else in the universe.

All that being said, the majority of *jīvas* in the universe do not reside in Bhārata-varṣa. They are simply enjoying their accumulated *karma* in various realms throughout the universe until it is exhausted to a certain level, and then they have to return to Bhārata-varṣa to generate more *karma*. The *devatās* don't ever have to do that. They are not under the same laws of *karma* that other *jīvas* are. But that is a topic for my next book.

Dying In the Dhāma

There are statements in *śāstra* and by various *ācāryas* indicating that persons who die in the Holy Dhāmas, e.g., Vṛndāvana, Māyāpura, etc., will attain the spiritual world even if they have remaining *anarthas* and haven't attained *mukti* or *prema-bhakti*.

For example, Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bṛhad Gautīmya Tantra*:

This charming Vṛndāvana possesses great power because its nature is pure consciousness, and it lies beyond the range of the physical eye. The most delightful Vṛndāvana is My only abode.

All the celestial beings, humans, domestic and wild animals, birds, worms and insects who reside in Vṛndāvana will go to My home [Goloka Vṛndāvana] when they die.

Attaining the spiritual world by dying in the Holy Dhāmas is a type of *kṛpā-siddhi* according to Jīva Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

***Bhāva* arising from Kṛṣṇa's mercy is now considered: This mercy arises from the words of the Lord, the presence of the Lord, or just appears in the heart. BRS, 1.3.16**

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

The mercy may be produced by the words spoken by the Lord. Alternatively, the Lord may bestow mercy, producing *bhāva*, by showing Himself to the devotee. On the other hand, the mercy may simply manifest in the devotee's heart. The verse starting *smerām bhaṅgi* in

the second part (BRS 1.2.239) illustrates mercy by seeing the Lord. Mercy given by Vṛndāvana and other items are included in the “mercy given by devotees”.

We learned previously that to enter Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world, one must first take birth in *bhauma-līlā* to undergo further purification and development of their *prema*. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that also applies at least to the *jīvas* mentioned in the above statement who are *devatās* and humans.

Based on the many references we’ve seen explaining how one attains results according to one’s desires and *sādhana*, we should also understand that the *jīvas* in various bodies mentioned by Kṛṣṇa in the above verse will attain different results according to the development of their *bhakti* and related desires. Since animals, birds, worms, etc., cannot practice *bhakti*, it may be reasonably assumed that they attained *śānta-rasa*, since one does not attain more than one desired.

For devotees who die in the Dhāma, although they are guaranteed to take birth in *bhauma-līlā*, the results they attain will still be based on their desires and the level of *bhakti* they have developed up to the point of death. That much is very clear based on all the evidence we’ve seen in this regard, especially Sanātana Gosvāmī’s commentary from *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, about devotees attaining different results. Here is that verse and commentary again.

The disciplines by which devotees in practice can reach Śrī Goloka – those very same disciplines let them see the Lord performing pastimes like those of Gokula, completely satisfied, in *vraja-bhūmi* in the mortal world. BB, 2.5.172

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

To search out the Lord in Gokula, Gopa-kumāra need not go down to the Earth, but he does need to learn the *sādhana*, the special practices, for attaining Kṛṣṇa’s personal abode. For intimate associates like Nanda Mahārāja no spiritual practice is needed, because they are eternal *vraja-vāsīs*. But for everyone else, careful endeavor is required.

On this path, not everyone attains the same level of success. A devotee may develop *bhakti* to the point of being able to see Kṛṣṇa but may not be able to see Him busily enjoying the special pastimes of Vṛndāvana with His intimate devotees.

When more advanced, a Vaiṣṇava may occasionally see Kṛṣṇa engaging in His Vṛndāvana pastimes but not displaying the full scope of His blissful enjoyment. And even such a Vaiṣṇava may not be fortunate enough to enter Kṛṣṇa’s eternal pastimes and play with Kṛṣṇa in absolute freedom. The highest perfection of *bhakti* is rarely achieved.

So although dying in the Dhāma may be considered a “Get Out of Jail Free” card, it doesn’t mean everyone who does so will attain the same results. The results will still be dependent on the depth and intensity of each individual’s *bhakti* and *prīti*. Thus, those who live in the Holy Dhāmas should take careful note of these very important factors, and do the needful to insure the highest possible outcome for their sincere endeavors.

Kṛpa-siddhi

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* Rūpa Gosvāmī discusses *kṛpa-siddhi*, by which one attains *prema-bhakti* without having done any studying, *seva* or *sādhana* – just by Kṛṣṇa's direct association and His causeless mercy, or sometimes by the mercy of a devotee at the stage of *prema-bhakti*. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* there are stories about Lord Caitanya blessing many people with *kṛpa-siddhi* during His travels to South India and Vṛndāvana.

Here are several references from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explaining *kṛpa-siddhi*.

***Bhāva* appears in very fortunate persons in two ways: by absorption in *sādhana* or by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee. Its appearance by *sādhana* is normal, and its appearance by mercy is rare. BRS, 1.3.6**

Now, *bhāva* arising from the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee is defined: That *bhāva* which appears suddenly without performance of *sādhana* is known as *bhāva* produced from the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee.

Bhāva arising from Kṛṣṇa's mercy is now considered: This mercy arises from the words of the Lord, the presence of the Lord, or just appears in the heart. BRS, 1.3.15-16

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

The mercy may be produced by the words spoken by the Lord. Alternatively, the Lord may bestow mercy, producing *bhāva*, by showing Himself to the devotee. On the other hand, the mercy may simply manifest in the devotee's heart. The verse starting *smarāṁ bhaṅgi* in the second part (BRS, 1.2.239) illustrates mercy by seeing the Lord. Mercy given by Vṛndāvana and other items are included in the mercy given by devotees.

The definition of *hārda* is given: That mercy which arises from within is called *hārda*.

Thus, it is said in the *Śuka-saṁhitā*: O Bādarāyaṇa, You have given birth to a great devotee as your son. Without *sādhana*, which brings about the goal, *bhakti* to Viṣṇu has appeared within his heart. BRS, 1.3.20-21

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Bhakti to Viṣṇu, which is the goal, has appeared without *sādhana*. The conclusion is that he [Śukadeva Gosvāmī] attained *bhāva* only by the mercy of the Lord, since there is no evidence of performance of any *sādhana*, or of obtaining the mercy of devotees.

This mercy must have appeared through the heart, because he developed *bhakti* in the form of remembering the Lord while still in the womb. While in the womb, he did not see

the Lord or receive words of blessing from the Lord. Thus, mercy manifesting in the heart could have been the only way. The *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa* gives the details.

Bhāva arising from the devotee's mercy is explained in the Seventh Canto:

Who could list the innumerable transcendental qualities of Prahlāda Mahārāja? He had unflinching faith in Vāsudeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and unalloyed devotion to Him. His *rati* to Lord Kṛṣṇa was *naisargikī*, through mercy. Although his good qualities cannot be enumerated, they prove that he was a great soul. SB 7.4.36

Favor, or *nisarga*, was granted to Prahlāda by Nārada and this created devotional impressions. Thus his *rati* is called *naisargikī* (through mercy). BRS, 1.3.21-22

There are two types of perfected devotees: those who have attained perfection (*sādhana-siddhas*) and those who are eternally perfect (*nitya-siddhas*).

Those who have attained perfection are of two types: those who have attained perfection by *sādhana* and those who have attained perfection by mercy. BRS, 2.1.281-282

Another example: [This is a verse spoken by Nārada to Śukadeva.]

You are not known to have suffered pains in service of the *guru*, and you have no trace of exerting even a drop of labor in following the rules of *sādhana*. But you have succeeded in attaining the river of nectar made of *prema* coming from the two lotus feet of Mukunda, which are the wealth sought by *paramahamsas*. BRS, 2.1.288

Those who attained perfection by mercy are Śukadeva, the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* and Bali, the son of Virocana. BRS, 2.1.289

Many devotees believe Śrīla Prabhupāda will bestow *kṛpa-siddhi* on all his followers simply because they chanted sixteen rounds of *japa*, avoided four bad activities (out of countless *anarthas* to be avoided), sold his books and performed other *seva*.

It must be assumed to be *kṛpa-siddhi* because those activities alone are not the full *abhidheya* given by Lord Caitanya, the previous *ācāryas*, or Śrīla Prabhupāda, to attain *prema-bhakti*, as we learned in the Section on *Rāgānuga-bhakti*. Those are *aṅgas* which are part of *vaidhī-bhakti*, and that is not sufficient to attain *prema-bhakti* and enter Vṛndāvana in *bhauma-līlā*.

Lord Caitanya explains this simple fact in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

[Kṛṣṇa thinks thus:] Everywhere in the world people worship Me according to scriptural injunctions (*vidhī-bhakti*). But simply by following such regulative principles

(vidhi-bhaktye) one cannot attain the loving sentiments (vraja-bhāva) of the devotees in Vrajabhūmi.

Knowing My opulences, the whole world looks upon Me with awe and veneration. But devotion made feeble by such reverence does not attract Me.

By performing such regulated devotional service (vidhi) in awe and veneration, one may go to Vaikuṇṭha and attain the four kinds of liberation. CC, 1.3.15-17

Very clear and direct. Yet every time a devotee in ISKCON passes away, it is automatically assumed and declared that they went “back to Godhead”, i.e., Goloka Vṛndāvana, based solely on that premise, and hearing *kīrtan* when they passed.

But did they actually attain *prema-bhakti* and thus become qualified to enter *bhauma-līlā*, and then *nitya-līlā* in the spiritual world? This is what many ISKCON devotees have been led to believe. Many devotees still don’t even understand that one has to first take birth in *bhauma-līlā* before actually entering the *nitya-līlā* in the spiritual world.

Based on all the detailed knowledge about *mukti*, *prīti*, and the *abhidheya* given by Lord Caitanya that we’ve examined up to this point, how likely is it that anyone is going to avoid having to become qualified as described and still attain *prema-bhakti*? Not impossible, but certainly not very likely. That much should be quite obvious based on all the evidence we have reviewed about the actual criteria for attaining *prema-bhakti*. It’s definitely not “cheap and easy”. That much is certain.

Think about this. What was the point of the previous *ācāryas* and Śrīla Prabhupāda presenting all this knowledge taught by Lord Caitanya if no one has to actually learn these details or become qualified to implement them? And where is there any indication that Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that we don’t have to become qualified to practice the *abhidheya* – *rāgānuga-bhakti*? There is no such evidence anywhere in his books. In truth, this mindset is a new type of *sahajiyā* mentality.

Let me give some examples. I’ve been told by a number of devotees that many leaders in ISKCON promote the idea that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us a special benediction, so we don’t have to learn about *rāgānuga-bhakti* or become qualified to practice it to attain *prema-bhakti*. However, I’ve yet to find any such statements from Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I also heard a recording of a prominent ISKCON *guru* where he stated during a *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* class that we don’t have to become qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti* in Kali-yuga – we just have to practice *vaidhī-bhakti* to Lord Caitanya and that is the same thing! He said it twice for emphasis. This is dangerous *apasiddhānta* with no support whatsoever.

In another recording, an ISKCON *guru* told his disciple that in his estimation, 90% or more of ISKCON *gurus* do not properly understand *rāgānuga-bhakti*, nor do they think it’s important to learn about or become qualified to practice. On what basis do such people imagine they are qualified *gurus*?

This excerpt from Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture on *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 1.2.33, will clear up any misconceptions about what Śrīla Prabhupāda's position was regarding *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

So you have to uncover. You have to discover. That discovering process is devotional service. The more you are engaged in devotional service, the more your senses become pure or uncovered. And when it is completely uncovered, without any designation, then you are capable to serve Kṛṣṇa.

This is apprenticeship. Vaidhī-bhakti, that is apprenticeship. Real bhakti, parā-bhakti, that is rāgānuga-bhakti. This rāgānuga-bhakti, we have to come to after surpassing the vaidhī-bhakti.

In the material world, if we do not try to make further and further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the *śāstric* regulation process and do not try to go beyond that...

Śāstric process also regulation, that is required. Without *śāstric* process you cannot go to that platform. But if we stick to the *śāstric* process only and do not try to improve ourself... The *śāstric* process is *kanīṣṭhā-adhikāra*, the lowest stage of devotional service.

*arcāyām eva harayepūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

Generally, people come to this temple, they are very devoted to the Deity. They offer their respects, flowers and other things, make the regulative process, circumambulate. This is nice beginning, but one has to go above this. One has to know who is actually *bhakta*, who is, *na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu*. One has to do good for others. That is *madhyama-adhikārī*.

If I become satisfied only with these regulative principles for worshiping the Deity in the temple and following the regulative principles daily, but if I have no other idea, then *sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*. *Prākṛta* means on the material platform. Such devotee can fall down at any moment, because he's on the *prākṛta* stage. And *prākṛta* means this *guṇamayī, prakṛti*. It is very strong.

So any devotee can fall down if he remains *prākṛta-bhakta*. So he has to raise himself above this to the *madhyama-adhikāra*. So here it is said that *sva-nirmiteṣu nirviṣṭo bhunkte bhūteṣu tad-guṇān*. So we are not enjoying actually. We are enjoying the interaction of the three modes of material nature. And we are thinking...

The same thing, as my *Guru Mahārāja* used to say, that licking up the bottle of honey. That is not real honey. You have to open the bottle of the honey and lick up the real honey, then you'll get taste. That is advancement of spiritual knowledge.

Therefore, if we do not associate with the advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikārī*, if we simply want to remain in the lowest stage of devotional service, then we are not making progress. Then we shall simply enjoy the material field, without entering into the spiritual platform.

Does that sound like Śrīla Prabhupāda was teaching that we don't have to become qualified to practice *rāgānuga-bhakti*? Or that *vaidhī-bhakti* is good enough, or the same? Śrīla Prabhupāda clarified that *vaidhī-bhakti* is “apprenticeship” and *rāgānuga-bhakti* is “real *bhakti*”. Take special note that this lecture was given in 1972 during the early stages of his mission. And this class was given in front of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Samādhi*, which may have inspired Śrīla Prabhupāda to make such emphatic statements.

Here is an excerpt from *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, Chapter 31, another early publication, where Śrīla Prabhupāda discusses the internal aspects of *rāgānuga-bhakti* in his summary of the discussion between Rāmānanda Rāya and Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

The process of transcendental realization is to follow in the footsteps of the associates of the Supreme Lord; therefore to think oneself a direct associate of the Supreme Lord is condemned. According to authorized Vaiṣṇava principles, one should follow a particular devotee and not think of himself as Kṛṣṇa's associate.²²

In this way Rāmānanda Rāya explained that one should accept the mood of the damsels of Vraja. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is clearly said that one should accept the emotional activities of the associates of Kṛṣṇa, not imitate their dress. One should also always meditate upon the dealings between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental world.

One should think of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day and engage in Their service within one's mind, not externally change one's dress. By adopting the mood of the associates and friends of Rādhārānī and following in their footsteps, one can ultimately achieve the perfectional stage of being transferred to Goloka Vṛndāvana, the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa.

By adopting this emotional mood of following in the footsteps of the gopīs, one attains his *siddha-deha*. This word indicates the pure spiritual body, which is beyond the senses, mind and intelligence. The *siddha-deha* is the purified soul who is just suitable to serve the Supreme Lord. No one can serve the Supreme Lord as His associate without being situated in his perfectly pure spiritual identity. That identity is completely free from all material contamination.

As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a materially contaminated person transmigrates to another material body by material consciousness. At the time of death he thinks materially and is therefore transferred to another material body. Similarly, one who at the time of death is situated in his pure spiritual identity thinks of the spiritual loving service rendered to the

²² This statement is referring to *ahamgrahopāsana*, where one thinks they are Subala, or Lalita, etc., as opposed to following them.

Supreme Lord and is transferred to the spiritual kingdom, to enter into the association of Kṛṣṇa.

In other words, the qualification for being transferred to the spiritual kingdom at the time of death is to think, in one's spiritual identity, of Kṛṣṇa and His associates. No one can contemplate the activities of the spiritual kingdom without being situated in his pure, spiritual identity (*siddha-deha*).

Thus Rāmānanda Rāya said that without attaining one's *siddha-deha* one can neither become an associate of the damsels of Vraja nor render service directly to the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal consort, Rādhārāṇī. In this regard, Rāmānanda quoted a nice verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.60):

“Neither the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, nor the damsels of the heavenly kingdom can attain the facilities of the damsels of Vraja-bhūmi – and what to speak of others?”

Clear and unambiguous facts directly from Śrīla Prabhupāda. Based on everything we have examined it should be very obvious to everyone that, other than dying in the Dhāma, there is no “Get out of Jail Free” card in this process, and that is certainly not what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught nor promised. And yes, I am fully aware of the many encouraging statements Śrīla Prabhupāda made which *seem* to imply that. None of those types of comforting statements changes or overrides any of these core facts.

But what about the many statements we've heard that if one remembers Kṛṣṇa or His name at the time of death, they will attain Him? Is it really that easy?

Here is a morning walk conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Nairobi, 11.2.1975, where he explains that unless one has become “perfect”, i.e., has attained *prema-bhakti*, they must take birth again to continue their progress to attain the *prayojana*. Śrīla Prabhupāda doesn't mince words in this discussion either.

Harikeśa: I'm curious about the destination of a neophyte devotee. If a neophyte devotee is with determination endeavoring for purification but he were to meet with death as he is still influenced by the lower modes, although he is seriously trying, then does he take another birth or does he go to Kṛṣṇa?

Prabhupāda: No, he has to take another birth. If he is not completely purified, he has to suffer another birth. Nobody is allowed to enter into the spiritual world unless he is cent percent pure. *No allowance*.

Then he has to... Therefore it is said, *śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo sañjāyate* [BG, 6.41]. He is given chance, another chance, to take birth in a very pure *brāhmaṇa* family or rich family so that he may take again the chance, not in, he is allowed to enter. He is given a good chance again. That is his benefit.

Even if you are failure, still, your next birth as a very first-class human being is guaranteed. Not for others. It is only for the *yogīs*. If he is... Therefore it is said that "What is the loss even if he is failure?" *Tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi yatra kva va abhadram abhūd amuṣya kim* [SB, 1.5.17].

This verse is very important. Even by sentiment one comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and discharges the regulative duties, chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, his next life is guaranteed as a human being. Even if he does it for some time and he is not perfect, still, his next life is guaranteed. But others, there is no such guarantee. Even if he discharges his so-called duties, material duties, there is no guarantee that he'll become a human being. [break]

Harikeśa: They let him (Ajāmila) stay in that body and then he went to Hṛṣīkeśa and performed devotional service and then became perfect.

Prabhupāda: No, he was already perfect, but to increase his desire, "How shall I go *Vaikuṇṭha*?" another time he had to go. He was a perfect; otherwise how he was saved from the *Yamadūtas*?

Harikeśa: So if a devotee dies and remembers Kṛṣṇa, although he is not perfect...

Prabhupāda: Unless he is perfect, he cannot remember Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible. That is not possible. That is theory only. He must be perfect. Somehow or other, he has fallen, so Kṛṣṇa gives him the chance. That is special concession for devotee. Some way or other, you become devotee. Even if you cannot finish the whole job, if you fall down, still, there is guarantee that you get your birth in a very good society. That is the prerogative.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's sobering statements in this conversation are fully aligned with what we have learned about the process, and what it takes to become qualified to attain *prema-bhakti*. When Śrīla Prabhupāda said "he must be perfect" he means he must have attained *prema-bhakti* – the *prajayana*. That takes a serious commitment to internal development and transformation.

Here is further confirmation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements above in this excerpt from *Bhakti Sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 159, with additional clarifying details for a deeper understanding.

Thus, the principle stated earlier that devotional activities performed even once bring forth the fruit of devotion is certainly true, provided there are no offenses, past or present. At the time of death, however, if one somehow manages to perform any type of devotional service even once, it is sufficient no matter what the circumstances.

But at the time of death only a person who has perfected his or her worship of Bhagavān, either in this life or in the past, is able to chant the name of Bhagavān or to engage in some other devotional activity even once. At that time the service manifests its influence, and after the devotee gives up that body, it awards the devotee direct vision of Bhagavān. This is also confirmed by Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

“O son of Kuntī, at the time of death a person dwells upon some particular object, and after relinquishing the body he or she attains to that state of being, having been constantly preoccupied with the thought of that object.” (BG, 8.6)

Since only one who is free from *aparādha* can chant at the time of death, the ability to do so indicates freedom from offense. As discussed earlier, repetition of the name or of other devotional activities is only to remove offenses. Because one who is able to chant at the time of death is already understood to be free from offenses, repetition of the name is not necessary to remove offenses.

Here is another related consideration. There are many stories about devotees, who, at the moment of leaving their bodies, saw different personalities like Śrīla Prabhupāda, Tulasī Devī, Yaśodā and Nanda, etc., whom they said were greeting them. These particular cases are referring to devotees who left their bodies outside of any Holy Dhāmas.

Do these incidents indicate that those devotees had attained *prema-bhakti*, even though they likely didn’t knowingly engage in *rāgānuga-bhakti* following a *vraja-vāsī* as explained? Were they completely free from offenses, or did they attain *kṛpā-siddhi*? I’m not in a position to speculate about their possible outcomes, so I’ll just leave it up to the readers to come to their own conclusions based on everything we have learned about the process, including Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statements above and the reference from *Bhakti Sandarbha*.

In any case, the same principle always applies in every case, i.e., one attains results based on the spiritual desires one cultivated during *sādhana*, and according to the intensity of one’s *bhakti* and *prīti*.

Strange as it may seem, some devotees have stated that their service to Śrīla Prabhupāda is equivalent to *rāgānuga-bhakti*. But in this excerpt of questions after a *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* class, Gorakhpur, February 18, 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes a clear distinction between *guru-seva* and becoming qualified for *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Haṁsadūta: So Prabhupāda, a neophyte devotee, he may think it might be very nice to be Krishna’s friend, but he may actually be a blade of grass, and he’ll be fully satisfied when he comes to that stage?

Prabhupāda: No. If he thinks like that, then he should cultivate that knowledge in that way. Yes. That is described in The Nectar of Devotion and Teachings of Lord Caitanya.

Haṁsadūta: But that may not be his actual position. It may be something else?

Prabhupāda: No. But when, at the time of devotional service, if such impetus comes, that means he has got such relation. It is to be developed. That’s all. That means the actual relationship with Krishna is coming out gradually. It is being developed. So one has to develop it, following the footsteps of Krishna’s friends in Vṛndāvana. These are described here.

Yes. Not directly. No. You cannot say that “I have become Sudāmā.” No. You have to follow the footsteps of Sudāmā. “I have become mother Yashoda.” No. You have to follow the footsteps of mother Yashoda. That is real position. And as soon as you say, “I am Yashoda. I am Sudāmā,” (*ahamgrahopāsana*) then it is as good as the Mayavadis say, “I am God.” You see? So dāsa-dāsānudāsa. That process should be followed.

Hamsadūta: Suppose someone is satisfied simply being related with the spiritual master.

Prabhupāda: That is everyone’s business. Everyone’s business. That is not a particular taste. That is the duty of all devotees.

Serving Śrīla Prabhupāda is *guru-seva*, an *aṅga* of *sādhana-bhakti*. It is a key component of the overall process but it is not the entire process in and of itself. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his disciples and future followers to learn the actual process (*abhidheya*), and to take it as far as one is capable. And the simple fact is that the highest *guru-seva* is to attain *prema-bhakti*, which is what any *guru* wants for their disciples.

Here is another important point to understand. Śrīla Prabhupāda is not “taking” anyone back to Godhead. That is not the *guru*’s function, nor does he “save” anyone, like Jesus. None of the previous *ācāryas* teach that either. That is another type of *sahajiyā* mentality, i.e., just follow the basics of *vaidhī-bhakti* and Śrīla Prabhupāda will “take you back to Godhead” even if you’re not qualified because you haven’t attained the goal of *prema-bhakti*.

The *guru*’s mercy comes primarily in the form of knowledge about the real nature of God, our eternal connection with God, and instructions about the process to attain a relationship with Him in the spiritual world. Then the *guru* provides guidance and support along the way. That is his primary mercy.

In addition, we learned in the section on *Sādhu-saṅga* that the *guru*’s mercy extends beyond just his instructions, but one must still make the endeavor to follow those instructions and guidance, and only then will one get that *additional* mercy. If one takes advantage of all that mercy, they will then get Kṛṣṇa’s mercy – *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo*.

If there is any “extra special mercy” from Śrīla Prabhupāda it is this. Although devotees may feel unqualified to learn about *rāgānuga-bhakti*, what to speak of becoming qualified to practice it, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy can remove any disqualifications impeding a serious devotee who has served faithfully and honestly and who earnestly desires to become qualified.

The bottom line is that we are all individually responsible for our progress, and must act accordingly to invoke the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this in a *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture in London.

You learn how to drive airplane. So you go high in the sky. But if you are in danger, no other airplane can help you. You are finished. Therefore you must be a very careful pilot to take care of yourself.

Similarly, in this material world everyone individually has to take care of himself. How he can be saved from the clutches of *māyā*. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. A teacher can give you hints. The *ācārya* can give you hints that, "You can be saved in this way." But the execution of the duties, that is in your hand.

Here is Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter to Satsvarūpa confirming the same thing, 9.20.1968.

Our relationship is eternal. But if somebody lags behind, so in spite of our eternal relationship one may not meet the other at the destination. Just like a flock of birds – although very intimately related, everyone of them has to fly in the sky by individual strength. If one is less strong, the other cannot keep him in the sky. That is the law of nature.

So long everyone of us is strong in Krishna Consciousness, there is no doubt, you can fly in the spiritual sky and meet together without failure. Therefore, individual strength is most important. And that individual strength is achieved in the association of devotees also. So you can make your own judgment.

Could it be more clear? Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission was to spread Lord Caitanya's movement worldwide, especially His teachings for serious devotees concerning the *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. He didn't change what Lord Caitanya taught in that regard, and he made it clear repeatedly that he never changed anything given by the *purva ācāryas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said at the end of one class that he had a "secret back door" to the spiritual world to let in his disciples, even if they did not attain perfection. Of course everyone was ecstatic hearing that. But after learning everything we have up to this point, including so many encouraging statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda, everyone should have a more sober and realistic perspective.

The sad irony is that we distributed Śrīla Prabhupāda's books "to save the *karmīs*", yet so many devotees have not taken full advantage of those same books "to save themselves". Distributing books is not enough in and of itself to save oneself. That is sentimental wishful thinking only. That should be more than obvious after learning everything we have in this treatise.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter (1.9.1973) to Rāmeśvara about book distribution confirms what he considered to be the most important thing for his disciples to understand and accomplish.

So you may understand it that by disseminating our Kṛṣṇa consciousness propaganda anywhere and everywhere, by selling books, by making publicity, newspapers, television, so many ways there are to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness information, you may know it that

by utilizing our energy in this way to give everyone access to the Absolute Truth, that is the real understanding of desire to serve humanity.

Understanding is one thing, and practical application of that understanding is another. But as devotees of Kṛṣṇa, being engaged in the practical work of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is already the highest realization. That's all right, that is our real mission, to deliver the world by preaching Kṛṣṇa's message to others, but even higher realization, the highest realization, is to save oneself.

Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita dāsa's memory:

The temple room was full of devotees, and one of the big book distributors asked, "Prabhupāda, what pleases you the most?" Prabhupāda said, "If you develop your love for Krishna that will please me the most." It was really nice to hear that, and all the devotees said, "Jaya, Śrīla Prabhupāda!"

There are a number of other strange distortions spread by ISKCON devotees regarding what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught about the process. Rather than review any more of them, the evidence presented in this section is more than sufficient to prove that all of these fabricated ideas and misunderstandings have no support in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, nor in the books of the previous ācāryas.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and Mañjarī-bhāva

I addressed this topic in more detail in my first book, however, there are aspects associated with it that are relevant to this treatise, considering all of the information we have just examined about developing one's eternal identity and relationship with Kṛṣṇa. So I will summarize the pertinent aspects here, along with several issues that need to be rectified.

Most Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineages (*parivāras*) are focused on *mañjarī-bhāva* as the *rasa* of choice of the *gurus* in these lines, and of course that is presumably what their followers aspire for. That's all well and good, and as it should be, but problems arise due to various assertions by the *gurus* and their followers in some of those *parivāras*.

For example, some of these devotees say that “*unnatojjvala-rasām*” mentioned in Rūpa Gosvāmī's verse (CC, 1.1.4)²³ directly means, or implies, *mañjarī-bhāva*. However, there is no evidence to support that, i.e., none of the previous ācāryas have stated that outright in any of their books. In *Prīti Sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmī refers to *mādhurya-rasa* as *ujjala-rasa*, so clearly it is just another name for *mādhurya-rasa*, and “*unnata*” is a descriptive adjective which means “elevated”, “prominent”, or “eminent”.

²³ May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love. CC, 1.1.4

Unnatobjjala-rasām thus indicates the highest manifestation of *mādhurya-rasa* in *vraja-līlā*, and that specifically means Rādhā and Her group of *sakhīs*. In other words, the relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the central focal point and highest expression of *mādhurya-rasa* in *vraja-līlā* – *unnatobjjala-rasām*. It does not mean or imply *mañjarī-bhāva*. It means that Lord Caitanya has given access to Rādhā's group, which was never done before.

These devotees then assert that *mañjarī-bhāva* is the only *rasa* by which one can enter Rādhā's group, and this is why that meaning is implied. They also say that *mañjarī-bhāva* is the highest position that a practitioner can aspire for within *mādhurya-rasa*. Some also contend that because the Six Gosvāmīs are *mañjarīs*, that means everyone should also aspire for that same type of relationship because it's the highest goal possible. These mistaken assertions will be refuted in this section.

They also claim that only the *mañjarīs* can experience Rādhā's emotions (*bhāvas*), including *mahābhāva*, but there is no evidence anywhere to support that. No such statements are found in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* or *Prīti Sandarbha*. The evidence actually shows that “all” of Rādhā's *sakhīs* experience Her *bhāvas* – not just the *mañjarīs*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja describes this in *Govinda-līlāmṛta*.

Just as the moon enlivens the lilies, so Kṛṣṇa is the bright moon that enlivens the lily-like hearts of the residents of Vṛndāvana. His pleasure-giving potency is personified in Rādhā, who is like a vine with fruits of *prema*. Her girlfriends (*sakhīs*) are the unlimited branches, leaves and flowers that expand out from Her self and are thus equal to Her.

For this reason, when that winding vine of love is watered with the heavenly potion of Kṛṣṇa's sporting activities, then its leaves and flowers, the *sakhīs*, find hundreds of times more pleasure than if they were themselves to be sprinkled. There is nothing unusual about this. GL, 10.16

If Kṛṣṇa should touch Śrīmatī Rādhārānī, then lo and behold Her *sakhīs* start to tremble, they sweat, their bodily hairs stand on end, and tears well up in their eyes. And if Kṛṣṇa should carefully sip the spirituous liquor of Rādhā's lips, it is they who become intoxicated! This is truly something wonderful. GL, 11.137

The conclusion is clear – *all* of Rādhā's *sakhīs* experience Her emotions related to Kṛṣṇa, not just the *mañjarīs*. All of Rādhā's girlfriends are intimately connected to Her and experience the unlimited waves of Her *prema* and *mahābhāva* for Kṛṣṇa, according to the nature of their personal relationship with Her and the depth of their *prema*. And we will learn about their different levels of *prema* in references from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

In fact, there is no specific emphasis on *mañjarī-bhāva* in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* or *Prīti Sandarbha*, the two books that are the definitive and preeminent analyses on the subject of *mādhurya-rasa*. Nor are there any detailed discussions therein about the superiority of *mañjarīs* to the other *sakhīs* in Rādhā's group.

Certainly there are books by devotees who are *mañjarīs* in *vraja-līlā*, such as Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's, *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, and some of the songs and prayers by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is a *nitya-siddha mañjarī* – Rati-mañjarī, and Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura aspired for that type of relationship, so naturally they, and others who aspire for that *bhāva*, will be inclined to extoll the glories of their cherished relationship with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. That is normal and to be expected.

But that does not mean that every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava must or should aspire for that type of relationship. None of the *ācāryas* teach that. We've already examined a preponderance of evidence from many sources, all of which indicate that the type of relationship one aspires to have with Kṛṣṇa is a matter of one's choice, based on one's natural and spontaneous attraction to a particular type of relationship, and including the influences from *sādhū-saṅga*.

One recent Gauḍīya Matha *ācārya* stated that to be a true “Rūpānuga” one must aspire to be a *mañjarī* following Rūpa-mañjarī, who was Rūpa Gosvāmī, otherwise, one is not a genuine “Rūpānuga” – one is merely a “Rāgānuga”. None of the previous *ācāryas* have ever stated that, and neither did Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The factual truth is that those who follow the path of *bhakti* as taught by Lord Caitanya and outlined by Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* are known as Rūpānūgas, regardless of the *rasa* they aspire for. Interestingly, here is a clear statement by Śrī Bhakti-prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda's godbrother and his *sannyasa guru*, explaining that Rūpānuga includes all four *rasas*.

Certain *sahajiyās*, following the theory of “*ichari-pāka*”, or expecting ripe fruit prematurely, say that “*Rūpānuga-bhajana*” consists of only the acceptance of *parakīyā madhura-rasa*. They have established that other *rasas* such as *dāsyā*, *sakhya* and *vātsalya* are not included within *Rūpānuga-bhajana*.

Such statements identify the *sahajiyās* section as being without proper understanding of *rasa-tattva*, and as being uncontrolled [independent]. These days, many persons situated within the line of conception flowing from Śrī Saraswatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, are fallen from the true line of thought of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and have actually taken shelter of the feet of the followers of the *sahajiyā* section, and are believers in this “*ichari-pāka*” philosophy.

Śrī Bhakti-prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja
The appearance of Śrī Baladeva, 21 August, 1958

We've seen countless statements from Kṛṣṇa and many *ācāryas*, and not one has emphasized or indicated that *mañjarī-bhāva* is the highest attainment for a practitioner, and that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas should only aspire for that *rasa* if they want the highest and best outcome. Yet this “*mañjarī-bhāva* only” mindset dominates the traditional *parivāras* and their followers.

Some of these devotees say that, out of shyness or humility, the Gosvāmīs hid the truth about the *mañjarīs* so that's why there aren't many details. But where is the evidence to support that

notion? *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* and *Prīti Sandarbha* elucidate all relevant facets about *mādhurya-rasa*, and it's ridiculous to think these *ācāryas* would leave out pertinent details about the *mañjarīs*, especially if that is supposed to be the focus for practitioners. “All” relevant details about the many different types of *sakhīs* were discussed in those books in great detail.

To resolve these issues we will examine some references from *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, where Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura discusses the five types of *sakhīs* in Rādhā's group and their hierarchical status in that group, based on different criteria. Many details are discussed about all these *sakhīs*, yet there is not one sentence about the supposed superiority of *mañjarīs*.

First, Śrī Viśvanātha defines the five types of *sakhīs* and explains a bit about their positions in Rādhā's group. As we will learn, the *mañjarīs* have *asama-sneha*, unequal affection, i.e., more affection for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa. The *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs* have *asama-sneha* and are thus understood to be the *mañjarīs*.

In Rādhā's group, which is the best of all, are beautiful women decorated with all good qualities, who completely attract Kṛṣṇa. The *sakhīs* of Rādhā are of five types: *sakhī*, *nitya-sakhī*, *prāṇa-sakhī*, *priya-sakhī*, and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī*.

The *sakhīs* are women like Kusumikā, Vindhyā, and Dhaniṣṭhā. The *nitya-sakhīs* include Kastūrī and Maṇi-maṇjarikā.

The *prāṇa-sakhīs* include Śaśimukhī, Vāsanti, and Lāsikā. All these three types generally have the same qualities as Rādhā. UN, 4.49-52

From Śrī Viśvanātha's commentary on verse 52:

Imāḥ means the *sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs*. They generally are almost equal to Rādhā in terms of *prema*, beauty, and good qualities. This means that they are not completely equal to Her. Those who are truly equal (to Rādhā) are the *priya-sakhīs*, and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*.

Though there are five types, one should understand that there are also two types, those with equal affection (*sama-snehā*) and those with unequal affection (*asama-snehā*). This will be explained later.

“If you say they are almost equal, then the *sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs* are somewhat inferior to Rādhā. This would mean they are servants as defined by the phrase “*tulya-rūpa-guṇā sakhyāḥ kiñcin nyūnās tu dāsikāḥ*: the servants are slightly less in qualities than the friends, whose qualities and form equal the queens.” (UN, 3.8)

That is not so. This statement concerning servants says they are somewhat equal or similar. This means that they are somewhat less than leaders. Thus, “being less” is of two grades. Similarity of qualities may be suitable or unsuitable for gaining respect. Those whose qualities are suitable, who have equal qualities by their nature are *sakhīs*. Those

whose qualities are unsuitable, and have fewer qualities by their nature are servants. Thus, there is no fault.

That clarifies the status of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*. Now we'll hear about the *priya-sakhīs* and *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, as well as what factors differentiate the five types of *sakhīs*. Within this commentary, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura also discusses why there is only one type of *sakhī* with more affection for Kṛṣṇa than Rādhā.

Those who were previously described as *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* are known by the wise as *sakhīs* with more love for the leader of the group [i.e., *mañjarīs*]. UN, 8.134

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

Previously the order of *sakhīs* was stated:

The *sakhīs* of Rādhā are of five types: *sakhī*, *nitya-sakhī*, *prāṇa-sakhī*, *priya-sakhī* and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī*. UN, 4.50

In order of greater excellence there are *sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs*, *prāṇa-sakhīs*, *priya-sakhīs* and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*. The verse states *prāṇa-sakhīs* and then *nitya-sakhīs*. This indicates that mainly the *prāṇa-sakhīs* have more affection for the leader of the group than the *nitya-sakhīs*. The same meaning is indicated in verse 137 by mentioning *parama preṣṭha sakhīs* and then *priya-sakhīs*.

Those who have equal love (*sama-snehā*) for Kṛṣṇa and the group leader (Rādhā), who identify themselves as belonging to Rādhā, are *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* and *priya-sakhīs*. UN, 8.137

From Śrī Viśvanātha's commentary:

"If there are three types of *sakhīs* – with more affection for Kṛṣṇa, more affection for Rādhā and equal affection for both – then why was it explained previously that there are five types? There are two varieties corresponding to their amount of love for those with more affection for the group leader (*prāṇa-sakhī* and *nitya-sakhī*) and for those with equal affection (*parama-preṣṭha-sakhī* and *priya sakhī*).

Why is there only one variety (*sakhī*) for those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa? There should be two varieties also for those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa. Do those *sakhīs* also not have grades of *prema*? And if those with equal affection are the best, then those with more affection either for the group leader or for Kṛṣṇa should be equally inferior.

Why are those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa, such as Kusumikā and Vindhyā, placed at the bottom? If you say that Kṛṣṇa is attracted to those who have more affection for the group leader, because She is dear to Him, then Rādhā should be attracted to those who have more attraction for Kṛṣṇa, because He is dearest to Her. If you say that the names

(i.e., the five types of *sakhīs*) are given by Kṛṣṇa because He is satisfied with them, why cannot Rādhā give the names?”

Here is where Śrī Viśvanātha explains the hierarchy of the five types of *sakhīs*, based on the increasing levels of *prema* they have for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Take note that the *mañjarīs* do not have the highest *prema* among them. They are in the middle.

One should understand the conclusion to these points. *Sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs*, *prāṇa-sakhīs*, *priya-sakhīs*, and *priya-narmā-sakhīs* all actually all have successively greater *prema* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is the significance of those names (i.e., the five types of *sakhīs*).

Those who have more affection for Kṛṣṇa are the *sakhīs*. The *nitya-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) have more affection than them for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa but they are called *sakhīs* with more affection for the group leader because they have slightly more affection for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa (*asama-snehā*).

The *prāṇa-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) have more affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa than the *nitya-sakhīs*, and slightly more affection for Rādhā. They are also called *sakhīs* with more affection for the group leader.

Those who have more affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa than the *prāṇa-sakhīs* but also have equal affection for both are the *priya-sakhīs*. They are called *sakhīs* with equal affection (*sama-snehā*).

The *priya-narmā-sakhīs* (*parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*, i.e., *aṣṭa-sakhīs*) have even more affection than the *priya-sakhīs* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but equal affection for both. They are also called *sakhīs* with equal affection.

The hierarchy of these *sakhīs* is absolutely clear, and the *mañjarīs* are not the highest or best. However, this does not mean that the *priya-sakhīs* are in a higher position than Rūpa-mañjarī, who is in a special category above the other *mañjarīs*, and who is their leader. Now Śrī Viśvanātha returns to explaining why there is only one type of *sakhī* with more affection for Kṛṣṇa than Rādhā.

“Let that be. I do not object to the successively higher statuses. But just as those with more affection for the *sakhī* (Rādhā) have two varieties – *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs*, so those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa should have two varieties – *sakhī* and *snigdha-sakhī*. Why not? Because of this, I am bewildered.”

That is true. It has previously been explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that attaining the position of a *gopī* cannot take place without *rāgānuga-bhakti*. And without following after the *nitya-siddha gopīs*, *rāgānuga* cannot be perfected. *Rāgānuga* means to follow after those

gopīs who have rāga. Those three types²⁴ who follow the nitya-siddhas attain perfection like the nitya-siddha gopīs but they exist externally in a slightly lesser position than the nitya-siddha gopīs that they follow.

Having loyalty to the group leaders and their sakhīs, according to their own desires, the three types who follow the parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs with equal affection for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa become priya-sakhīs with a similar type of affection.

The last paragraph above proves conclusively that one can also aspire for, and attain, the position of a *priya-sakhī* in Rādhā's group. To reiterate, there are no statements in any of the books of the previous *ācāryas* which assert that one can only aspire to be a *mañjarī* and nothing else, if they want to gain entrance into Rādhā's group. No such restriction is ever mentioned by the *ācāryas*.

Therefore, one can also aspire to be a *priya-sakhī* by following one of the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*. And the *priya-sakhīs'* superior status, relative to the *mañjarīs* in the group, has been delineated for everyone's clear and correct understanding. The commentary continues.

The three types who follow the prāṇa-sakhīs with more affection for Rādhā become situated eternally as nitya-sakhīs with more affection for Rādhā. [i.e., mañjarīs]

But there are not three types who follow after *sakhīs* with more affection for Kṛṣṇa. Because there is no one following after those *sakhīs*, having only one type, there is no lesser type than them.

“Why should they not be followed?” According to the principles of rāgānuga-bhakti a person should follow a desired gopī while having affection for her not less than one's affection for Kṛṣṇa. If one follows a gopī while having less affection for her than for Kṛṣṇa, it would not be much different from vaidhī-bhakti.

Even *vaidhī-bhakti* cannot be perfected without following devotees. Therefore in *rāgānuga-bhakti*, persons who desire to follow a *sakhī* with more affection for Kṛṣṇa must not have less affection for that *sakhī* than for Kṛṣṇa.

However, that person would also have to have slightly less affection for Rādhā and other group leaders than for Kṛṣṇa (since there is a preference for stronger affection for Kṛṣṇa than Rādhā). But it is very improper to consider the group leaders to be inferior to the *sakhī*. Therefore one does not follow such a sakhī, and therefore there is one variety of those who have more affection for Kṛṣṇa.

Once again, a lucid and unambiguous explanation of these complex details from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. For further confirmation of Śrī Viśvanātha's statement, here is Rūpa

²⁴ Śrī Viśvanātha doesn't explain what he means by the “three types who follow”, but it may be referring to what was discussed earlier in Chapter 8, Verse 2: Among the *sakhīs*, those who are attached to only one group are divided into the types: *adhika*, *sama* and *laghu*; and *prakhara*, *madhya* and *mrdvi*.

Gosvāmī's explanation in *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-ganoddēsa-dīpikā*, regarding the *priya-sakhīs*, and those who attain that position by their *sādhana* and *bhajana*.

The *sakhīs* in the *mandala* are divided into two groups according to their *prema*: *sama* (equal) and *asama* (unequal).

The *priya-sakhīs* are in the category of *sama-prema* (equal love). They are further divided into two groups: the eternally perfected (*nitya-siddhas*), and those who have attained perfection by the practice of devotion (*bhakti-siddha*). RKGD, 2.233-234

Enough evidence has been provided here to challenge all the wrong assertions made about *mañjarīs* being the best, or only access point to Rādhā's group. And it also doesn't matter that the Gosvāmīs are all *mañjarīs*, which is another argument some people use. The Gosvāmīs never teach in their books that one is mandated to follow their specific *rasa*. We've just seen ample evidence in this treatise that the choice is up to each *jīva*.

And it also doesn't matter that most of the Gauḍīya lineages are *mañjarī*-centric. That is their personal choice and there are no issues with that. Certainly, if one associates with those who are followers of *mañjarīs* then one may very well be influenced to follow that path. Or not. It all depends on one's inclinations and accumulated *saṁskāras*.

This is not a matter of metrics either, i.e., "this is what *most* lineages promote". This is a matter of the heart. The core principle is to follow one's heart, but it is highly advantageous to learn the truth about these details so one knows what options are available, and so one is not confused by biased misconceptions.

There are many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who aspire for various types of *sakhya-rasa*, including *priya-narmā-sakhas*, and there are *sakhā* lineages from Caitanya Mahāprabhu. My godbrother, Tripurārī Svāmī has just published a book about that: *Circle of Friends*. Are there lineages following the *priya-sakhīs*? I haven't found any evidence of such lineages, but to be fair, I haven't done any research in that regard.

In any case, the apparent absence of such lineages does not mean one cannot pursue the goal of being a *priya-sakhī* because Kṛṣṇa will arrange for suitable association and assistance in all cases. He promises to help in every way, as we have seen, so there are no impediments. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains this in *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*.

When this greed has appeared in the heart, one becomes enlightened in different ways. Uddhava says in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 11.29.6:

"Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself through the *ācārya* or through the agency of the Supersoul."

Thus, some devotees attain knowledge about the moods of Kṛṣṇa and His Vraja associates from the mouth of a *guru*, some from the mouth of a learned *rāgānuga* devotee, and some, whose hearts have been purified by the practice of devotional service, will have this knowledge directly revealed to them from within their hearts. They advance in great

transcendental bliss, just as one sees a lusty man enjoying great pleasure when his desires are fulfilled. RVC, 1.9

The perfect example of this is Śrīla Prabhupāda himself, who aspired to be a *priya-narmā-sakhā* as clearly indicated in his Jaladūta poem, along with the compelling evidence presented in the book, *Oh My Friend!*, which is mentioned in the next section. However, it is well known that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī revealed that his *rasa* was *mañjarī-bhāva*.

Yet Śrīla Prabhupāda was not attracted to that type of relationship, nor was he influenced to follow his *guru* in that regard. Why not? It can only be concluded that it was due to *saṁskāras* from previous lives, as explained in the reference from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (BRS, 2.1.6) quoted in the section describing how the *jīva*'s relationship with Kṛṣṇa is established. Śrīla Prabhupāda was not in a *sakhya-rasa* lineage either, nor did he ever indicate that he had any direct association with other advanced devotees in *sakhya-rasa*.

Having considered all these details, the conclusion is that *mañjarī-bhāva* is not the only *rasa* by which one can enter Rādhā's group and it is not the highest position one can attain. One can aspire to enter Rādhā's group as a *mañjarī*, following Rūpa-*mañjarī* or the *mañjarī* of their choice, or one can aspire to be a *priya-sakhī*, following one of the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, whose *rāga* and *bhāvas* one desires to develop.

There are other details about the amazing qualities and unique services of the *mañjarīs* but none of those details change what was stated above in Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentaries regarding the hierarchy of the *sakhīs* in Rādhā's group. Those additional details are in my first book. The evidence given here is conclusive and resolves all stated issues.

Can Jīvas Have Different Rasas in Vraja-līlā simultaneously?

This is another misconception that some devotees are propagating, i.e., that one can attain more than one type of relationship with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*, i.e., two or more different *rasas*, like *sakhya* and *mādhurya*, along with two different identities suited to each *rasa* – simultaneously.

I've primarily encountered this idea from those in the camp of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja insisted that Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal *rasa* is as a *mañjarī*, whereas, several disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda have collected a preponderance of evidence, including many direct statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda, to support that he is a *priya-narmā-sakhā*²⁵ in Subāla's group.²⁶

25 The *priya-narmā-sakhā* knows the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, covets the desire for Kṛṣṇa meeting the *gopīs*, and is the best among all the dear friends of Kṛṣṇa. In Gokula, Subāla and Arjuna are *priya-narmā-sakhās*. UN, 2.13

26 My godbrother, Babhru dāsa (now Bhakti Asrama Svāmī) compiled a book of this evidence, *Oh My Friend*.

After examining all the evidence on both sides and having debated the matter on numerous occasions, I also support that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *priya-narmā-sakhā*. However, I'm not going to broach that subject here. The point is that some on the *mañjarī* side have argued that Śrīla Prabhupāda could have two different *rasas*, i.e., *sakhya-rasa* and *mādhurya-rasa*. They base this on the fact that Lord Balarāma has multiple expansions in *vraja-līlā*, namely, Anāṅga-mañjarī. Keep in mind that Lord Balarāma is *Viṣṇu-tattva* and Śrīla Prabhupāda is *jīva-tattva*.

Another argument given for multiple *rasas* is based on the verse from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, which was quoted by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his commentary to *Brahma-sūtras*, 4.4.11.

He becomes one. Then he becomes two, three, five, seven, nine, and eleven. He becomes one hundred and ten. He becomes one thousand and twenty. CU, 7.26.2

However, as we saw in the context of that group of *sūtras* and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary, that verse has absolutely nothing to do with a *jīva* attaining multiple *rasas* in *vraja-līlā*. Those multiple bodies are not eternal spiritual bodies – they are material bodies created by the will (*satya-saṅkalpa*) of the *jīvan-mukta*, and not produced from *karma*. As we read, the *jīvan-mukta* enjoys those bodies in the material world.

It should be more than clear from all the evidence we've examined that *sādhana-siddha jīvas* can only attain one type of relationship, which requires very intense focus and deep attachment to Kṛṣṇa in the context of that one particular *rasa*. There is no evidence to support the idea that one can attain two different identities and *rasas* in *vraja-līlā*. It would be an impossible practice.

All that being said, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote in *Jaiva-dharma* that one can attain one's desired identity in *vraja-līlā* and in addition one may also attain an identity in Gaura *līlā*. But one must also cultivate the desire to participate in Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *līlā* during *sādhana* along with their desires related to *vraja-līlā*.

Obviously, in the identity in Gaura *līlā* one will be meditating internally on one's identity in *vraja-līlā* because there is a direct connection between those two identities. Thus, there is no conflict (*rasābhāsa*). Other than these statements from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, I have not found support for this idea in any other books of the *ācāryas*.

Vrajanātha: What is the ultimate destination of the unalloyed *bhaktas* of Śrī Gaura-Kiśora (Caitanya Mahāprabhu)?

Bābājī: Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura-Kiśora are non-different in their *tattva* (absolute nature). They are both shelters of *mādhurya-rasa*. However, there is a slight difference between Them because *mādhurya-rasa* has two *prakoṣṭas* (chambers). One is the mood of *mādhurya* (sweetness), and the other is the mood of *audārya* (magnanimity). Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svārūpa* is manifest where *mādhurya* is prominent, and Śrī Gaurāṅga's form is manifest where *audārya* is prominent.

Similarly, the transcendental Vṛndāvana also has two *prakoṣṭa* (divisions): Śrī Kṛṣṇa's abode and Śrī Gaura's abode. The *nitya-siddha* and *nitya-mukta* associates who reside in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's abode are attracted first to *mādhurya*, and then to *audārya*.

The *nitya-siddha* and *nitya-mukta* associates who reside in Śrī Gaura's abode are blissfully absorbed in *audārya*, and then *mādhurya*. Some of them reside in both abodes simultaneously by expansions of the self (*sva-rūpa-vyūha*), while others reside in one spiritual form in only one abode, and not in the other.

Those who only worship Śrī Gaura during their period of *sādhana*, only serve Śrī Gaura when they achieve perfection, while those who only serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa during their period of *sādhana* serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa on achieving perfection.

However, those who worship the forms of both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaura during their period of *sādhana* manifest two forms when they attain perfection and reside in both abodes simultaneously. The truth of the simultaneous oneness and difference of Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a very confidential secret. JD, Chapter 17

Regarding *nitya-siddhas* expanding into multiple identities, in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Sanātana Gosvāmī explains that the *nitya-siddhas* in *vraja-līlā* also have expansions in *Vaikuṇṭha* who sometimes descend as *devatās*, as well as in *bhauma-līlā*.

Just as the demigods who have entered the material creation are counterparts of the Lord's *Vaikuṇṭha* associates, those eternal associates from *Vaikuṇṭha* are incarnations of the *Goloka* devotees. Yet like the demigods themselves, those very devotees appear on Earth now and again for the pleasure of Lord Viṣṇu when He wants to enjoy various pastimes. BB, 3.6.202-203

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

Some say that many of the *vraja-vāsīs* who appeared on Earth during Kṛṣṇa's pastimes five thousand years ago were incarnations of demigods. Nanda Mahārāja, for example, is said to be an *avatāra* of the Vasu named Droṇa. If taken literally, this idea would rule out the possibility that the earthly *vraja-vāsīs* are eternal associates of the Supreme Lord.

But the truth is just the opposite: As confirmed in scriptures such as the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Uttara-khaṇḍa*), demigods like Droṇa are partial expansions of the original *vraja-vāsīs*, and those original *vraja-vāsīs* accompany Kṛṣṇa when He descends to Earth.

Goparāja Nanda and other devotees in *Goloka* expand as *avatāras* in *Vaikuṇṭha* to become Śrī Nanda and other associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa. The same devotees thus enjoy pastimes in two worlds simultaneously, *Goloka* and *Vaikuṇṭha*. And so it would be incorrect to assert that because the *Vaikuṇṭha* associates of Nārāyaṇa are *avatāras* they are not eternal.

The same associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa expand again into the material world to become demigods. This verse calls those demigods *pratirup*, (counterparts), rather than *avatāras*,

because the demigods are materially conditioned living beings. Still, those demigods are empowered representatives of the Supreme Lord's personal associates.

In the next few verses, Śrī Sarūpa will describe the incarnations of the *goloka-vāsīs* as parallel to Kṛṣṇa's incarnations; that is, just as Kṛṣṇa's *avatāras* are non-different from Him, the earthly associates of Kṛṣṇa are non-different from the original *goloka-vāsīs*.

Alternatively, the word *pratirūpa* (counterpart or representative) can be taken as synonymous with the word *avatāra*. Then the idea implied is that the associates of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha who expand from the original *goloka-vāsīs* are like direct reflections (*pratibimba*) of those *goloka-vāsīs*, and the further expansions as demigods are like shadows (*pratichāyā*). Both a reflection and a shadow follow a person as expansions, but the shadow represents him less fully than does his mirror image.

Thus, if Nanda Mahārāja on Earth is called an *avatāra* of Droṇa, it is only because both of them are *avatāras* of Nanda Mahārāja in Goloka. In fact, Nanda on Earth is identical with Nanda in Goloka, and Droṇa is only a partial expansion; but by worldly calculations demigods are considered relatively superior to humans, so Nanda on Earth is considered Droṇa's incarnation. Thus it is said that demigods like Vasu Droṇa descend to Earth to assist Lord Viṣṇu, the younger brother of Indra, in His enjoyment.

Just as Lord Viṣṇu's incarnations appear only briefly in the material world but periodically reappear, the Lord's associates who manifest themselves as demigods also incarnate as earthly *avatāras* whenever there is a need. For example, Śrī Nanda Goparāja, the eternal beloved father of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka, appears in Vaikuṇṭha as the eternal associate of Nārāyaṇa called Nanda, and he also occasionally descends to Earth in his original identity.

So too, Śrī Balarāma, who originally resides in Goloka, manifests Himself in Vaikuṇṭha as the eternal associate named Śeṣa. Yet He appears among the demigods as the bearer of the Earth in the seventh Pātāla region, and He sometimes comes to Earth as the selfsame Balarāma.

Kṛṣṇa's friend Śrīdāmā in Goloka appears as Garuḍa in two different forms, one an eternal associate of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha and the other a son of Vinatā among the demigods; and occasionally he appears on Earth as the original Śrīdāmā.

Kṛṣṇa's parents in Goloka, Śrī Vasudeva and Devakī, appear as Sutapā and Pṛṣṇi in Vaikuṇṭha, Kaśyapa and Aditi in *svarga*, and sometimes in their original forms as Vasudeva and Devakī on Earth. The *avatāras* of other devotees follow the same pattern.

Therefore, in the absence of any *śāstric* evidence, or from the *purva-ācāryas*, it can be concluded that *sādhana-siddhas* cannot attain two different types of *rasas* with Kṛṣṇa in *vraja-līlā*. We've seen what it takes to attain *prema-bhakti* for just one relationship, thus, it is patently impossible that one could properly cultivate two different intense relationships simultaneously. It would also be classic *rasābhāsa*.

Demons Attain Various Destinations – Sāyujya-mukti and More

I mentioned this section previously. Here are the fascinating and unexpected details regarding the destination of various *asuras*. This *sūtra* was quoted before but it is directly relevant here as well.

Sūtra - 3.3.53

...”Let that be. You have said earlier that one cannot see the Lord without *vidyā* and one cannot have liberation without seeing the Lord. Both of these statements are incorrect because one can see the Lord without *vidyā*, when the Lord makes His appearance as *avatāra* and those who thus see Him do not get liberation.”

This is not true. From seeing the Lord in a general way one does not get liberation, just as dying does not give liberation. One attains a higher [realm] by seeing the Lord without *bhakti*. This is not liberation. BS, 3.3.53

The word *api* expresses limitation. Seeing the Lord in a general way does not cause liberation, just as dying is not the cause of liberation. What is the result of seeing the Lord (without *bhakti*)? By seeing Him in a general way, one attains a higher [realm], as did the Vidyādhara Sudarṣana or King Nṛga.

"Going to a higher [realm] is liberation." No, it is only elevation to a higher [realm]. Smṛtis confirm this: from seeing the Lord in a general way one goes to a higher [realm] and from seeing him with qualification one attains liberation. (*Nārāyaṇa-tantra*).

The meaning is this. Seeing the Lord is of two types: where the Lord is covered and where the Lord is not covered. The first type arises by great piety and by its influence it makes one attain [realms] like *svarga*.

The second type, arising by making the Lord filled with knowledge and bliss one's dearest love, causes liberation on destroying the body by *brahma-vidyā*. Thus everything is resolved.

They say that some attained liberation by seeing the Lord when they were killed by him. This was caused by the destruction of their body by the power of the touch of His *cakra*. When their subtle body is thus destroyed, their attitude towards the Lord instantly changes from hatred towards affection. Consequently, at the moment of death they see the Lord with affection and thereby attain liberation.

Thus one should understand that the cause of liberation is seeing Him with affection. Otherwise there would be contradiction to many scriptural statements.

Although many devotees may have assumed that anyone who sees Kṛṣṇa directly will automatically attain *kṛpā-siddhi* of some form, such is not the case, as explained above. There are always various factors involved that result in different outcomes.

Here again is the verse from *Brahma-saṁhitā* with commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī, where he explains the destination of some of the *asuras* who were part of *bhauma-līlā*. I quoted this verse and commentary in an earlier section but left out the parts relating to the destination of the *asuras* and those inimical to Kṛṣṇa. Those parts are presented here.

Those who contemplate Him with feelings of lust, anger, the natural intimacy of friendship, fear, parental affection, bewilderment, reverence and servitude, attain bodies (suitable for associates of *Bhagavān*) with various degrees of beauty and qualities corresponding to their individual meditations. I worship that original personality, Govinda. BrS, 55

Commentary by Jīva Gosvāmī:

Svayam bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only actual bestower of results; He bestows the appropriate fruits upon all. The results bestowed by others are perishable, but the fruit bestowed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa is never subject to destruction. *Bhagavān* is eternal, His devotees are eternal, and His *bhakti* and the fruit of *bhakti* are also eternal.

Because pure devotees are full of deep attachment for Him, they are infinitely superior to the desireless *yogīs*. That *Prabhu* who bestows even upon His most antagonistic enemies a result that is supremely difficult for great *yogīs* to attain must necessarily, according to the logic of “inferential partial illustration”, bestow the highest fruit of all upon His devotees who incessantly cultivate favorable activities and moods in His service. This is certainly not a point of controversy.

...For example, when Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's enemies such as Kāṁsa and Śiśupāla become absorbed in Him, even through moods that are unfavorable to *bhakti*, He bestows upon them a transcendental destination. Aho! Pūtanā was a man-eating demoness, accustomed to killing babies and drinking their blood, yet the most liberal and merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave her a destination befitting a nurse-maid in Goloka because she had assumed the appearance of a mother.

Vṛṣabhāsura and Keśīdaitya also attained destinations like the oxen that pull carts in Goloka Vraja. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also awarded a destination to the wicked Kālīya-nāga in Goloka Vraja, using him as a boat in His water pastimes. Although many other *avatāras* of Bhagavān are bestowers of elevated destinations upon their enemies, they have given the demons killed by them destinations such as heavenly happiness and vast sensory enjoyment.

However, they have not given destinations extending even up to the point of liberation, what to speak of elevation to Goloka. Anger is the mood of an enemy. Natural intimacy is the mood of a friend.

...The purport of saying that those who contemplate Bhagavān attain bodies corresponding to their moods is that by becoming absorbed in these moods at the time of

sādhana, when they achieve perfection, they attain bodies like the associates of Bhagavān according to their individual bhāvas, and they become absorbed in His service.

Those who become absorbed in the transcendental subject through the mood of anger attain only a partial aspect of that transcendence in the form of impersonal liberation (sāyujya-mukti).

Kṛṣṇa's mercy extends even to the *asuras* who exhibit unfavorable moods towards Him, and the results are unexpected and astonishing in some cases. In his commentary to *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura also explains the destination of various individuals with different moods towards Kṛṣṇa.

Just as by *vaidhī-bhakti* one can attain one's spiritual goals, many persons have attained suitable forms after absorbing their minds in the Lord out of lust, hatred, fear, and family relationships filled with affection, and after giving up absorption in enmity of the Lord (in the case of hatred and fear).

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

All persons with moods favorable or unfavorable towards the Lord attain Him. However, by reasoning, one should understand that, according to the sādhana, the result will be different. That is described in this verse. "Giving up sin arising from hatred of the Lord" means "giving up absorption in the Lord based on hatred." This phrase does not apply to those who have conjugal desire for the Lord, since there is no sin in this type of *kāma*. This word *kāma* refers to the gopīs.

...If those who hate the Lord attain Him, how much more those who have affection for Him will attain! Tad-gatiṁ means one's cherished goal of prema, or liberation as the case may be.

My dear King Yudhiṣṭhira! The gopīs by their conjugal desires, Kāṁsa by his fear, Śiśupāla and other kings by envy, and the Yadus and you Pāṇḍavas by your affectionate family relationships with Kṛṣṇa, and we, by our *vaidhī-bhakti*, have obtained the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. SB, 7.1.30-31

Commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

The different persons holding these emotions are listed in this verse. As was previously explained, the lust mentioned here is love arising from intense spiritual affection, rather than ordinary conjugal love like Kubjā's. Fear means fear arising from a person's knowledge that Kṛṣṇa will kill that person. The Yādavas – you, the Pāṇḍavas – achieved Me by relationship (*sambandhāt*), of seeing Me as a son, a brother, or cousin, which are full of affection.

This excludes Satrājī, Prasena, Śatadhanva, Karṇa, Duryodhana and others, who did not have affection, though they may have had a family relationship. *Sneha* should not be taken as a separate type of *sādhana*, since later only five types of moods are mentioned. *Vayam* refers to Nārada. The verb is in the previous verse. Nārada and others achieved the goal by *bhakti*. The *gopīs* achieved the position of lovers of Kṛṣṇa filled with *prema*.

Kāmsa achieved sāyujya. Śiśupāla, Dantavakra, and Pauṇḍraka achieved sārūpya. Other enemies achieved sāyujya, sālōkya or other goals suitable to them. The Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas attained the position of associates of the Lord in friendship and other moods. Nārada and others (who performed *vaidhī-bhakti*) attain the position of associates with *aiśvarya-jñāna* (reverence). According to the *sādhana*, they achieved goals which can be understood by seeing the different statements concerning these persons.

It's interesting to note that even the *asuras* attain positions that are directly related to how they meditated on Kṛṣṇa even with their unfavorable moods. An obvious question arises: How would inherency proponents explain these destinations? Were they inherent in their *svarūpas*? This is indirect proof of the non-inherency of one's *rasa*.

Reconciling Śrīla Prabhupāda's Statements

Time and Circumstance Considerations and Adjustments

In previous sections we analyzed and compared several of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements with those of the *ācāryas*, and those details have been reconciled properly. Now we'll examine the circumstances surrounding Śrīla Prabhupāda's endeavors to spread Lord Caitanya's movement worldwide.

There is an anecdote about Śrīla Prabhupāda meeting with his godbrother, Dr. O.B.L. Kapoor (Ādikeśava prabhu) in Vṛndāvana, who asked him, (paraphrasing) "Why are you preaching that *jīvās* fall from the spiritual world?" To which, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Preaching is not always *siddhānta*."

There is confirmation from Sādhu Mahārāja, a respected Vṛndāvana Vaiṣṇava, who met with Śrīla Prabhupāda and who also knew Dr. Kapoor, that this exchange did indeed take place as stated. So it's definitely not *hearsay*. Thus, it gives us an inside perspective that helps us better understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's approach to preaching to a worldwide audience of varied cultures, most of whom were unfamiliar with the vast body of Vedic and Vaiṣṇava knowledge.

In consideration of those challenges, Śrīla Prabhupāda made what he felt were necessary time and circumstance related adjustments to his preaching messages, as well as his approach to engaging people gradually and progressively in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. He explained this in his purport to *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam*, 1.9.9.

Expert religionists know perfectly well how to adjust religious principles in terms of time and place. All the great ācāryas or religious preachers or reformers of the world executed their mission by adjustment of religious principles in terms of time and place.

There are different climates and situations in different parts of the world, and if one has to discharge his duties to preach the message of the Lord, he must be expert in adjusting things in terms of the time and place.

Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms this adaptable approach in his purports to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, where he reveals more insights regarding his perspectives and strategies for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the modern world of different cultures, and in lieu of the unique conditions he was faced with at that particular time.

Not knowing that boys and girls in countries like Europe and America mix very freely, these fools and rascals criticize the boys and girls in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for intermingling. But these rascals should consider that one cannot suddenly change a community's social customs.

However, since both the boys and girls are being trained to become preachers, those girls are not ordinary girls but are as good as their brothers who are engaged in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, to engage both boys and girls in fully transcendental activities is a policy intended to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

These jealous fools who criticize the intermingling of boys and girls will simply have to be satisfied with their own foolishness because they cannot think of how to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by adopting ways and means that are favorable for this purpose.

Their stereotyped methods will never help spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, what we are doing is perfect by the grace of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, for it is He who proposed to invent a way to capture those who strayed from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. CC, 1.7.31-32

As an ideal ācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu devised ways to capture all kinds of atheists and materialists. Every ācārya has a specific means of propagating his spiritual movement with the aim of bringing men to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, the method of one ācārya may be different from that of another, but the ultimate goal is never neglected. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī recommends:

“An ācārya should devise a means by which people may somehow or other come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. First they should become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and all the prescribed rules and regulations may later gradually be introduced.” In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we follow this policy of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

For example, since boys and girls in the Western countries freely intermingle, special concessions regarding their customs and habits are necessary to bring them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The ācārya must devise a means to bring them to devotional service. Therefore, although I am a *sannyasi*, I sometimes take part in getting boys and girls married, although, in the history of *sannyasa*, no *sannyasi* has personally taken part in marrying his disciples. CC, 1.7.37

To broadcast the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one has to learn the possibility of renunciation in terms of country, time and candidate. A candidate for Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western countries should be taught about the renunciation of material existence, but one would teach candidates from a country like India in a different way.

The teacher (ācārya) has to consider time, candidate and country. He must avoid the principle of *niyamāgraha* – that is, he should not try to perform the impossible. What is possible in one country may not be possible in another. The ācārya’s duty is to accept the

essence of devotional service. There may be a little change here and there as far as *yukta-vairagya* (proper renunciation) is concerned.

...It is not necessary that the rules and regulations followed in India be exactly the same as those in Europe, America and other Western countries. Simply imitating without effect is called *niyamāgraha*. CC, 2.23.105 ²⁷

The adjustments Śrīla Prabhupāda made clearly include the way he taught certain parts of the philosophy, the obvious one being how the *taṭastha-śakti jīvās* became entangled in the material worlds. There was ambiguity in some of what he said and wrote, as evidenced by the misinterpretations of the *jīva* fall proponents, who desperately cling to those particular references, which they insist are proof that *jīvas* fell from the spiritual world.

But the strangest conundrum is this. Śrīla Prabhupāda stated the factual and *final śāstric conclusion* many times in his books – with no ambiguity – and fully in sync with the previous *ācāryas* and *śāstra*. Yet, in spite of that, many devotees still remain confused about this issue and cannot accept the simple truth. Even in the face of irrefutable evidence from *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra*.

In a desperate act of misplaced loyalty, many of these devotees insist that both ideas can be true simultaneously, i.e., fall and no fall. And to make matters worse, they often cite the principle of “*acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*” as some sort of convoluted proof that two conflicting ideas can be true. It is not any such proof because that philosophical principle has nothing to do with this issue.

It must also be noted that this *apasiddhānta* is only taught by ISKCON members. No other Vaiṣṇavas misunderstand these *tattvas* and *siddhāntas*, nor has this been taught by any lineage in the past since it is not supported by *śāstra*.

The *jīva* fall issue is a prime example, but the topic of the *jīva's svarūpa* is similar in terms of the misconceptions that are prevalent, as well as the importance of understanding it properly. This treatise has presented a preponderance of evidence in support of the correct understanding of this and other related topics.

Thus, it is crucial that we understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements in the proper and full context to reconcile them with the truths from *śāstra* and the *ācāryas* we have learned from our study of these subjects. We must also understand them in the context of knowing without doubt that Śrīla Prabhupāda made many adjustments to his presentation to insure that the mission would be spread successfully worldwide. In the next section we will examine more of the unique circumstantial factors Śrīla Prabhupāda was dealing.

²⁷ Please also read the morning walk conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda and Dr. Patel, in the *Appendix*.

Harmonizing Śrīla Prabhupāda's Preaching and Translations

In the section, *How Does Prema Manifest in the Jīva's Svarūpa?*, we examined the *nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema* verse from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in detail as an excellent example of how to properly understand and reconcile Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations with those of the previous ācāryas.

Given the full scope of the evidence we have examined in this treatise, there is no need to do an analysis of every translation or commentary of Śrīla Prabhupāda which may appear to be contradictory or ambiguous. The *nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema* example establishes the point well enough. A similar analytical process and comparison with the statements of the previous ācāryas can easily be applied to other statements or translations that require reconciliation. Additionally, the correct *tattvas* and *siddhāntas* for these subjects have been established irrefutably herein for everyone to examine and assimilate.

Here are the other important circumstantial considerations that must be taken into account. On the one hand, Śrīla Prabhupāda's consistent preaching message was that love of God is dormant within our hearts, and he stated that our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is an inherent part of the *jīva's svarūpa*, and it is unique for each *jīva*. As such, it will simply manifest from within our *svarūpa* in due course of time as one's heart is purified by chanting, *sādhana*, and *sādhū-saṅga*.

Not surprisingly, the *jīva* fall misunderstanding has further contributed to confusing things because it is wrongly believed by many devotees that the *taṭastha-śakti jīvās fell* from Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*. As such, *jīvās* already have a pre-existing relationship with Kṛṣṇa that will simply be reawakened, and one will be reinstated to one's original former relational status, even remembering their past in Goloka, including friends and relatives.

On the other hand, consider all the numerous esoteric details we have just examined regarding these topics. It is obvious that Śrīla Prabhupāda's preaching would not have been as effective if he tried to convey all these technical details in the beginning stages of his mission. That is not a good preaching approach to inspire the interest of the uninformed general public, nor to attract serious followers. There was more than enough general Vedic knowledge he needed to convey that would overwhelm everyone.

Nor is it a good teaching method to give advanced esoteric details to neophytes who did not have the *adhikāra* to grasp such things. You don't teach advanced mathematics to people who are just beginning to learn the basic fundamentals of arithmetic. Here is a letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda to his disciple, Upendra dāsa, 11.13.1968, which explains this principle.

Your question, "When one has become pure enough, Krishna conscious, does one take regular dictation from one's Guru Mahārāja? I know you to confirm yes, but how is this so? Understanding that each individual has a certain particular *rasa* with Krishna, how would one relate with another soul of a different *rasa*? Especially between that of the Guru and disciple?"

That doesn't matter. The spiritual master's position is to train the disciples. Just like a teacher, he may be a very expert mathematician, but in the lower class he is teaching English. The spiritual master's duty is to train him, but when he comes to the perfectional stage of training, then he realizes his position. That is not a gift of the spiritual master, the Spiritual Master helps him to realize his relationship with the Lord.

Just like the student in lower stages has to study so many things as preliminary education, English, history, math, etc., but in higher stage of education, he has got a particular taste for a special subject, so he specializes as a mathematician or a historian, etc. So that special qualification reveals in the higher stage.

So these topics are not to be discussed in the conditioned stage, and when we come to the liberated stage we can understand. This is useless talks in the preliminary stage. In the beginning let us do the preliminary routine work very nicely, and be cured of the disease (out of *māyā*), then we can know what taste you have for what particular type of food. So these things are not to be discussed at the present moment.

Thankfully, Śrīla Prabhupāda was an expert teacher as well as a powerful preacher so he spoon fed us gradually, according to what he perceived we could assimilate and practically apply effectively. Baby steps were the order of the day for us, whether we knew it or not.

For preaching, Śrīla Prabhupāda kept everything simple, consistent, and enticing: “Love of God is in your heart. Just chant, dance, and feast on *prasadam* to awaken that love, and you will go back to Godhead!” If only it were that simple. That is mostly *preaching* – not *teaching*. There is a subtle but very important difference. Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly blended both.

So the questions remain: Was Śrīla Prabhupāda wrong to say such things that were technically inaccurate? Did he not understand or make mistakes? No, unquestionably not. There was absolutely no fault in how he preached the philosophy like he did to people in general, both in lectures and in his books. As well as to his young neophyte disciples, in letters and conversations. That was his judgment call being inspired and guided by Paramātmā in his desire to serve Lord Caitanya's movement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's goal was to first get people interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and for those of us who wanted more, he engaged us in direct service and *sādhana-bhakti* to reinforce our progress. He did this knowing that those who were really serious would eventually be guided by Kṛṣṇa, when they were ready, to go deeper and learn the finer details. Just as we have done here in this treatise.

Therefore, and with good reason, Śrīla Prabhupāda was consistent with his basic preaching messages – most often to a different audience every day or two since he was travelling constantly. He was simultaneously preaching broadly to the general public at arranged events in each city he travelled to, and he had to keep his neophyte disciples enthused and eager. You can't do that if you overwhelm them with too many technical details they cannot fathom. The principle at work is to keep basic things simple and easy and to repeat them consistently: “Chant 16 rounds, follow the 4 regulative principles, and go back to Godhead!”

“Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!” we resoundingly exclaimed when he said that at the end of all his lectures, naively believing that’s all we had to do to enter the spiritual world. But now we have learned what the *abhidheya* actually entails, and there is no way Śrīla Prabhupāda could have, or should have emphasized those particular details to us back then. We were absolutely not ready, nor qualified to understand those details properly, what to speak of applying them. Clearly though, he did leave lots of hints, as we have seen.

At the same time, in his *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* purports, Śrīla Prabhupāda presented myriad details about Vedic culture and its histories throughout our universe. As well as the particulars of the many spiritual paths presented in the Vedas, which are designed for people at different stages of spiritual progress, and with different goals.

All of this new information was overwhelming and quite astonishing for us. We had never heard most of it before, and much of it was literally “other worldly”, and often difficult to fully fathom for our young minds and intellects. Nonetheless, we imbibed it willingly and eagerly. It was all part of our necessary foundational education regarding Vedic culture and its core principles.

Another very important consideration is that most devotees did not hear Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture in person on a regular daily basis (some never did), and temple classes were one verse and purport per day, given by *kaniṣṭhās* who were not well versed in these subjects, nor spiritually advanced, and that includes all the GBC and *sannyasis*. In hindsight, that much is more than blatantly obvious.

Most temples only had one class in the morning and one at night and many devotees were drifting in and out of sleep during those classes. Not exactly a concentrated or effective educational program for neophytes, and the results were mixed, as one might expect. Śrīla Prabhupāda even wrote in several letters that it was time to “boil the milk”, i.e., to focus on studying and learning the philosophy, and not just selling books and getting more followers.

But very few temple presidents encouraged or facilitated personal study time for the devotees. Most devotees were heavily pressured to distribute the books but not read them – work now, *samādhi* later, was the hammer most often used. As if any of us was qualified for *samādhi* back then, or even understood what it really meant.

Shockingly, many devotees were deliberately discouraged from reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and were told that distributing books was more important than reading them! So how much effective education was really taking place in ISKCON during the 1970s? Not much. Sadly, Śrīla Prabhupāda understood that.

In Toronto, September 1975, I was just ending my tenure as temple president of Toronto and was getting ready to take over as the new temple president of Chicago. As such, I hosted Śrīla Prabhupāda's first visit to Toronto. Soon after arriving at the temple we were standing alone together in the hallway outside of his apartment and Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me, “So, you are distributing my books – but are you reading them too?” To which I answered, “Oh yes Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have four classes every day.” He was not expecting that answer.

When I said that, there was an immediate look of slight shock in his eyes and then a big smile lit up his face. His eyes opened wider, revealing he was happily surprised, and his surprise and deep gratitude were conveyed powerfully to my heart through his eyes when he replied, “Thank you very much.” An impactful *saṁskāra* for me – never to be forgotten.

Over the next few days, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me to speak in front of him during two gatherings – first at a home program in Toronto and then with the assembled devotees in the garden of the new Montreal temple. Presumably he wanted to hear how much I really understood from all those classes. Thankfully, he never appeared disappointed with what I said or corrected me.

All that being said and understood, Śrīla Prabhupāda knew very well that our progress was going to be slow and very gradual, in spite of our unbridled youthful passion and enthusiasm. What to speak of the fact that clearly everyone was not on the same level – that much is also very obvious in hindsight.

So he wisely chose to focus on some details but not all of them, for many reasons that should now be more than clear to all readers. You don’t teach students things they are not qualified to understand or ready to apply. You help them take the next small steps forward and maintain steadiness.

To reiterate, the conclusion I have arrived at is that Śrīla Prabhupāda was not wrong to adjust things the way he did, nor did he make any philosophical mistakes in his presentations due to a lack of understanding. All contradictions, either apparent or otherwise, were obvious adjustments he made based on the challenges he faced due to the unique nature of his audience, time, and circumstances.

Knowing the full philosophical details regarding these subjects as we do now, since having full access to the books of the previous *ācāryas*, we can better comprehend why and how Śrīla Prabhupāda made the adjustments he felt were necessary to get the essence of Lord Caitanya's message across and accomplish his mission, especially knowing that his time was limited, as he often said.

So the bottom line for serious practitioners is the same as always. With regard to understanding core *tattvas* and *siddhāntas*, and all related philosophical details, the *pūrva ācāryas* – the Six Gosvāmīs – are the ultimate authorities regarding philosophical matters. All presentations made after them must be harmonized with their foundational texts.

Finally, any statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda that cannot be supported fully by *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra* must be understood as possible adjustments based on time and circumstance considerations. It’s not more complicated than that. Philosophical issues cannot be properly resolved by referencing *guru* only. That is definitely not what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught. That is sentimentalism bordering on fanaticism, neither of which are acceptable under any circumstances.

Final Conclusions and Considerations

We've come to the end of our journey through *śāstra* and the books of the previous *ācāryas*. The breadth and depth of the *ācāryas*' presentations opens the mind and heart in new and powerful ways and delivers the truth without compromise or ambiguity. As I stated in the beginning, there was no better way to thoroughly examine these topics other than a comprehensive review of exactly what the *ācāryas* have written on these subjects.

Is the Jīva's Līlā Relationship With Kṛṣṇa Inherent In Their Svarūpa?

If you've read and understood everything up to this point, the answer to this question should be more than self-evident, as I indicated at the beginning of the book. That question has in fact been answered repeatedly throughout this treatise with irrefutable evidence, which has also served to refute all arguments from inherency proponents.

We've examined so many explicit details about our nature as *jīvās*, and nowhere has there been any discussion or indication by Jīva Gosvāmī, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, or any other *ācāryas*, either directly or implied, that the *jīva's* relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His eternal *līlās* is an inherent aspect of each *jīva's svarūpa*. Neither are *bhakti*, *prema* and all related elements of a spiritual identity and relationship inherent in the *jīva's svarūpa*.

Those relational elements are manifest solely by Kṛṣṇa's *svārūpa-śakti*, and we know that *svārūpa-śakti* is not inherent or dormant within *taṭastha-śakti*. They are two distinct *śaktis*, *svārūpa-śakti* being superior and supreme because it is Kṛṣṇa's personal *śakti*. *Taṭastha-śakti* can be covered by *māyā-śakti*, but *svārūpa-śakti* can never be covered by *māyā-śakti*. This idea is philosophically irreconcilable.

As we read, the commentaries of the *Brahma-sūtras* are structured as questions or doubts (*pūrva-pakṣa*), with subsequent answers and refutations of those doubts and incorrect assumptions. It's very revealing to note that there were no *pūrva-pakṣas* which asserted or asked whether the *jīva's* relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of His realms and *līlās* is inherent in the *svārūpa* of the *jīva*.

That question wasn't even a consideration in these lengthy discussions and elucidations. We have seen vividly how many minute details these *ācāryas* explored in their presentations and commentaries, and thus it is inconceivable that they would have left out something as fundamentally important as the inherency of one's *rasa*. Nor would they have alluded to it in a covert or ambiguous way, since that is not how they analyzed these subjects. There are always direct and clear, without the need for speculative interpretations to suit one's bias.

If the inherency of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa was a key aspect of the *jīva's svarūpa* it would most certainly have been discussed at length, along with the process to awaken what is already there, either dormant or in seed form. But no such statements or discussions are to be

found in Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentaries or Jīva Gosvāmī's analyses in *Paramātmā Sandarbha* and *Prīti Sandarbha*. Or any other books of the *ācāryas* for that matter.

It should also be very clear that neither Jīva Gosvāmī nor Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa – what to speak of all the other *ācāryas* – could possibly have failed to address a topic so foundational as an inherent relationship in the *jīva's svarūpa*. Every important detail was presented systematically and discussed thoroughly – except that one major topic. Why?

The simple and undeniable fact is that the *ācāryas* didn't discuss the inherency of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or its related *prema*, as part of the *jīva's svarūpa* because it is categorically not inherent nor dormant in the *jīva's svarūpa*. *Jīvās* only have the potential to receive *prema* due to their eligibility as *taṭastha-śakti*, and because their eternal constitutional disposition is to render service to Kṛṣṇa in some capacity.

That fact has been proven conclusively and with absolute finality, based on the overwhelming and irrefutable evidence presented from *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra*, along with solid *śāstric* logic and unambiguous straight forward reasoning.

Having engaged in countless discussions and debates on this topic, as well as having read related articles and books, I have consistently seen that those who argue the position of inherency always resort to cherry-picked statements from *śāstra* and the *ācāryas*, and almost always out of context. Then they twist and spin with lofty word jugglery and speculation to make them fit their skewed bias. Most often, the evidence never directly supports their position, so it is easily dismissed as invalid, as we have seen repeatedly.

Here is another key flaw in their assumptions. Inherency promoters never reconcile how the *abhidheya* taught by Lord Caitanya supports inherency of one's *rasa*. They cannot show any evidence from *śāstra* or the *ācāryas* where it is stated that these pre-existing details will simply manifest over time as a result of *sādhana*. That is not even remotely how the *abhidheya* works, as we have learned.

We've seen countless statements indicating that the *jīva* chooses the type of relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and who they will follow to attain that goal. We've learned how *sādhū-saṅga* is the most powerful influence on the *jīva's* choices, as arranged by Kṛṣṇa according to the *jīva's* evolving desires and inclinations.

The perfect example of this are all the people who have been influenced by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda presented details regarding many of Kṛṣṇa's incarnations, such as Lord Rāma, Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, Varāha, etc. Yet most of his disciples and followers desire to be with Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana, in *vraja-līlā*, because of Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal influence through his speaking, writings and his *sādhū-saṅga*.

After examining the entire body of evidence presented in this treatise we can now clearly see that all contrary arguments have no standing or support. It's just misguided speculation, along with faulty extrapolations, based on an incomplete understanding of all the evidence, and related connections.

Keep in mind that this conclusion is fully established even without considering all the details related to *mukti*, which, when taken into account, just add more weight to the same conclusion. If the *jīva*'s relationship is inherent, then why is there so much discussion about *mukti* and the different types and levels of *mukti*? It makes no sense if *jīvas* are all preprogrammed.

Regarding *mukti*, consider this. If *bhakti* and *prema* are inherent in the *jīva*'s *svarūpa*, then how have so many millions of *jīvan-muktas* realized their *svarūpa* yet no *bhakti* or *prema* has manifest? They attained *mukti* and realized their *svarūpa* as Brahman, but they didn't experience any *bhakti* or *prema*. The conclusion is obvious. Many aspirants only used *bhakti* as a means to an end, as we learned. They will only get *bhakti* if they are fortunate enough to meet a devotee who causelessly blesses them with the seed of *bhakti*.

Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prīti Sandarbha* is a primary treatise on everything related to *prema* (*prīti*). There was not one sentence in *Prīti Sandarbha* about the inherency of one's spiritual identity and *rasa* with Kṛṣṇa, nor did Śrī Jīva say it is given by one's *guru* and thus, one has no say in the matter – no freedom of choice for this one most consequential and eternal desire and choice.

Here is another point of logic for deliberation. As we learned, *prema* is not generic – it is relationship specific. The relationship defines the type of *prema*. A relationship cannot take place unless there are two people with suitable identities. We learned that one's spiritual identity is developed preliminarily during *sādhana*, i.e., one's *siddha-deha*. And from *Prīti Sandarbha*, we learned that the *jīva*'s spiritual identity finally manifests directly in accordance with the type of *prīti* they are manifesting for Kṛṣṇa.

Thus, in order for *prema* to be inherent in the *svarūpa* of the *jīva*, it means there must be an inherent pre-existing suitable identity as well, which is the basis for the relationship. However, the only “identity” associated with the *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is the *jīva*'s generic sense of “I”, i.e., the sense of being a unique individual person. But that has nothing to do with an identity in one of Kṛṣṇa's *līlās*.

The knowledge from the *ācāryas* and *śāstra* presented in this treatise eradicates all *apasiddhānta* and ignorance regarding these specific topics. Serious devotees are encouraged to study these details in the original texts for their own edification and progress. It's hard to imagine that one would not be powerfully inspired after assimilating all of this incredible knowledge.

But most importantly, this knowledge shows us that we have a very real opportunity to make this our last life in material existence. That is an extraordinary fact everyone should contemplate very deeply. And we have more than enough mercy to support us, from *caitya-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the previous *ācāryas*, advanced Vaiṣṇavas, and especially from the most munificent Lord Caitanya, who desired to flood the world with *prema-bhakti*.

When one truly understands the knowledge presented in this treatise, one will also realize that one has been given a very special and powerful gift from Kṛṣṇa, via Lord Caitanya, the previous ācāryas, and as delivered to the world by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's special mercy is not a “secret back door”. He gave us the key to open the “confidential front door” – *rāgānuga-bhakti*. His special mercy is this: even though we may feel we could never become qualified, by Śrīla Prabhupāda's special mercy, we *can* become qualified by following the *abhidheya* outlined by the previous ācāryas. But we must eagerly take that mercy and make the necessary effort.

Some final concluding thoughts by Sanātana Gosvāmī from *Bṛihad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

Once one has overcome the obstacles on the path that arise from frailties like fear, one can then achieve pure love in which one thinks of the Lord like a close friend in the ordinary world. For this one must have a strong desire to serve the Lord in the manner of His gopas and gopīs. BB, 2.5.217

Commentary by Sanātana Gosvāmī:

When a serious devotee first sets his aim on following in the footsteps of the *Goloka-vāsīs*, the goal may seem far away. He may begin his endeavor still encumbered by many material desires. But the more he carefully studies the transcendental reality, the more he renounces his unsuitable desires. He then rises above the misgivings born of fear, reverence, distrust, and shame. The real beginning of spiritual life, therefore, is to become free from material desires.

Until the obstacles are overcome, the devotee sees the object of his devotion only as the supreme powerful and so remains too fearful and respectful to have any real love for Him. But later, when the devotee swims in the vast ocean of *bhakti*, the superficial waves of contrary impulses recede, and he is granted the super intelligence for friendship with the Supreme. The devotee then approaches the Lord with such apparently worldly moods as that of a consort or a son and serves His lotus feet accordingly. He renders pure devotional service, as defined in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

“When one develops an unflinching sense of ownership or possessiveness in relation to Lord Viṣṇu (or Kṛṣṇa), or, in other words, when one thinks Viṣṇu and no one else to be the only object of love, such an awakening is called *bhakti* by exalted persons like Bhīṣma, Prahlaḍa, Uddhava, and Nārada.”

The only remaining question for each of us is this:

What will I do with this gift?

Appendix

Cover Painting

This is the information I found online for the cover painting...

A Deity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya, said to have been installed at PratāpaPura when Mahāprabhu left Purī for Vrndāvana, has been described in the report of the archaeological survey of the Mayura Bhañja State. This Deity and the Deities at Kālnā are perhaps the oldest of all the Deities of Mahāprabhu.

There is also a famous painting of Mahāprabhu listening to Gadādhara Paṇḍita recite Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, believed to have been done on the order of Mahārāja PratāpaRudra. This painting is preserved in the house of the zāmindara of Kuñja Ghāṭa. The residents there are descendants of Mahārāja Nanda Kumāra, an ardent disciple of Śrī RādhāMohan Ṭhākura. The king Nanda Kumāra was hanged by Lord Hastings. [Sambidānanda]

Legend has it that this painting was given by Rājā PratāpaRudra to Śrīnivasa Ācārya when he came to Purī. Then the painting was given by Śrīnivasa's descendant, Śrī RādhāMohan Ṭhākura, to Mahārāja Nanda Kumāra, his disciple.

Here is a more detailed account for those interested...

https://www.Rādhā.name/news/india/king-prataparudras-painting-of-lord-caitanya-0?fbclid=IwAR2z2tmDwbgz5BhA_lcyBriUXglDOBY-hwHPU0q7KNuFin2mas1PD46czdA

Morning Walk – Śrīla Prabhupāda: “I Never Said That!”

After saying several times throughout the previous years, not to read any other books but his, here's what Śrīla Prabhupāda then said on a morning walk, May 13, 1975, Perth, Australia:

Paramahansa: Śrīla Prabhupāda, I remember once I heard a tape where you told us that we should not try to read the books of previous ācāryas.

Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Amogha: That we should not try to read Bhaktivinoda's books or earlier books of other, all ācāryas. So I was just wondering...

Prabhupāda: I never said that.

Amogha: You didn't say that? Oh.

Prabhupāda: How is that?

Amogha: I thought you said that we should not read the previous *ācāryas'* books.

Prabhupāda: No, you should read.

Amogha: We should.

Prabhupāda: It is misunderstanding.

Paramahansa: I think maybe he was thinking that there was some things about some of the Gauḍīya Matha books.

Prabhupāda: Maybe.

Paramahansa: And sometimes you said that better not to, better to read your books.

Amogha: When the devotees went to India this year, they said that Acyutananda Svāmī very, chastised them that “You should never... If I catch any of you buying Bhaktisiddhanta’s books from Gauḍīya Matha then I will take them away.” Something like this.

Paramahansa: Yeah, that was, the reason was because of, he didn’t want the devotees going to Gauḍīya Matha. But there’s nothing wrong with the idea of studying the previous *ācāryas'* books.

Prabhupāda: No. Who said? That is wrong. We are following previous *ācāryas*. I never said that.

Paramahansa: All of your commentaries are coming from the previous *ācāryas*.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Jayadharma: But that wouldn’t mean that we should keep all the previous *ācāryas'* books and only read them.

Prabhupāda: That is already there. You first of all assimilate what you have got. You simply pile up books and do not read – what is the use?

Jayadharma: First of all we must read all your books.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Paramahansa: Practically speaking, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are giving us the essence of all the previous *ācāryas'* books in your books.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to Śrīmad-bhāgavatam, 2.9.10

In that personal abode of the Lord, the material modes of ignorance and passion do not prevail, nor is there any of their influence in goodness. There is no predominance of the influence of time, so what to speak of the illusory, external energy; it cannot enter that region. Without discrimination, both the demigods and the demons worship the Lord as devotees. SB, 2.9.10

Purport by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

The kingdom of God, or the atmosphere of the Vaikuṇṭha nature, which is called the tripād-vibhūti, is three times bigger than the material universes and is described here, as also in the Bhagavad-gītā, in a nutshell. This universe, containing billions of stars and planets, is one of the billions of such universes clustered together within the compass of the mahat-tattva. And all these millions and billions of universes combined together constitute only one fourth of the magnitude of the whole creation of the Lord.

There is the spiritual sky also; beyond this sky are the spiritual planets under the names of Vaikuṇṭha, and all of them constitute three fourths of the entire creation of the Lord. God's creations are always innumerable. Even the leaves of a tree cannot be counted by a man, nor can the hairs on his head.

However, foolish men are puffed up with the idea of becoming God Himself, though unable to create a hair of their own bodies. Man may discover so many wonderful vehicles of journey, but even if he reaches the moon by his much-advertised spacecraft, he cannot remain there.

The sane man, therefore, without being puffed up, as if he were the God of the universe, abides by the instructions of the Vedic literature, the easiest way to acquire knowledge in transcendence. So let us know through the authority of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam of the nature and constitution of the transcendental world beyond the material sky.

In that sky the material qualities, especially the modes of ignorance and passion, are completely absent. The mode of ignorance influences a living entity to the habit of lust and hankering, and this means that in the Vaikuṇṭhalokas the living entities are free from these two things.

As confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, in the brahma-bhūta stage of life one becomes free from hankering and lamentation. Therefore the conclusion is that the inhabitants of the Vaikuṇṭha planets are all brahma-bhūta living entities, as distinguished from the mundane creatures who are all compact in hankering and lamentation.

When one is not in the modes of ignorance and passion, one is supposed to be situated in the mode of goodness in the material world. Goodness in the material world also at times becomes contaminated by touches of the modes of passion and ignorance. In the Vaikuṇṭhaloka, it is unalloyed goodness only.

The whole situation there is one of freedom from the illusory manifestation of the external energy. Although illusory energy is also part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, illusory energy is differentiated from the Lord. The illusory energy is not, however, false, as claimed by the monist philosophers. The rope accepted as a snake may be an illusion to a particular person, but the rope is a fact, and the snake is also a fact. The illusion of water on the hot desert may be illusion for the ignorant animal searching for water in the desert, but the desert and water are actual facts.

Therefore the material creation of the Lord may be an illusion to the non devotee, but to a devotee even the material creation of the Lord is a fact, as the manifestation of His external energy. But this energy of the Lord is not all. The Lord has His internal energy also, which has another creation known to be the Vaikuṇṭhalokas, where there is no ignorance, no passion, no illusion and no past and present.

With a poor fund of knowledge one may be unable to understand the existence of such things as the Vaikuṇṭha atmosphere, but that does not nullify its existence. That spacecraft cannot reach these planets does not mean that there are no such planets, for they are described in the revealed scriptures.

As quoted by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, we can know from the Nārada-pañcarātra that the transcendental world or Vaikuṇṭha atmosphere is enriched with transcendental qualities. These transcendental qualities, as revealed through the devotional service of the Lord, are distinct from the mundane qualities of ignorance, passion and goodness. Such qualities are not attainable by the non devotee class of men.

In the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa, it is stated that beyond the one-fourth part of God's creation is the three-fourths manifestation. The marginal line between the material manifestation and the spiritual manifestation is the Virajā River, and beyond the Virajā, which is a transcendental current flowing from the perspiration of the body of the Lord, there is the three-fourths manifestation of God's creation.

This part is eternal, everlasting, without deterioration, and unlimited, and it contains the highest perfectional stage of living conditions. In the Sāṅkhya-kaumudī it is stated that unalloyed goodness or transcendence is just opposite to the material modes. All living entities there are eternally associated without any break, and the Lord is the chief and prime entity.

In the Āgama Purāṇas also, the transcendental abode is described as follows: The associated members there are free to go everywhere within the creation of the Lord, and there is no limit to such creation, particularly in the region of the three-fourths magnitude. Since the nature of that region is unlimited, there is no history of such association, nor is there end of it.

The conclusion may be drawn that because of the complete absence of the mundane qualities of ignorance and passion, there is no question of creation nor of annihilation. In the material world everything is created, and everything is annihilated, and the duration of life between the creation and annihilation is temporary.

In the transcendental realm there is no creation and no destruction, and thus the duration of life is eternal unlimitedly. In other words, everything in the transcendental world is everlasting, full of knowledge and bliss without deterioration. Since there is no deterioration, there is no past, present and future in the estimation of time.

It is clearly stated in this verse that the influence of time is conspicuous by its absence. The whole material existence is manifested by actions and reactions of elements which make the influence of time prominent in the matter of past, present and future. There are no such actions and reactions of cause and effects there, so the cycle of birth, growth, existence, transformations, deterioration and annihilation – the six material changes – are not existent there.

It is the unalloyed manifestation of the energy of the Lord, without illusion as experienced here in the material world. The whole Vaikuṇṭha existence proclaims that everyone there is a follower of the Lord. The Lord is the chief leader there, without any competition for leadership, and the people in general are all followers of the Lord. It is confirmed in the Vedas, therefore, that the Lord is the chief leader and all other living entities are subordinate to Him, for only the Lord satisfies all the needs of all other living entities.

Morning Walk – Śrīla Prabhupāda Discusses His Strategies With Dr. Patel

Here is a morning walk conversation, September 30, 1975, between Śrīla Prabhupāda and Dr. Patel, where Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly explains some of his strategies for introducing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world and especially his disciples. It was more or less a *jump-start* program, and the details come later:

Dr. Patel: No, these boys who are recruited newly, they don't have much about the idea of Vaiṣṇavism. That is the...

Prabhupāda: That's all right. That's a fact. But what can I do? They are my helper.

Dr. Patel: They have to be trained up earlier and then let loose. Otherwise, you know, they create it. Because all the bad impressions are for them.

Prabhupāda: No. They'll be trained while working. Not that simply theorizing at home. No.

Dr. Patel: That's right, but I think...

Prabhupāda: They should work, and at the same time, they may fall down, just like a child tries to walk, falls down, again walks, again... Then he becomes complete.

Dr. Patel: Those thirty, I mean, characteristics of a *sādhū* that are depicted in the, in *Bhāgavata*...

Prabhupāda: That is not possible in one day.

Dr. Patel: Thirty cannot come, but a few should come.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Few that... They are... *yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā, sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ* [SB 5.18.12]. If they have got unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa and guru, that is all qualification.

Dr. Patel: That is a fact.

Prabhupāda: That is all qualification. *yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā, sarvair guṇais*. All these qualities are already there.

Dr. Patel: But for that, you see, he has to withdraw his mind and all the senses from...

Prabhupāda: Even he does not withdraw, even it is *su-durācāro, api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ sādhuḥ eva saḥ* [Bg. 9.30].

Dr. Patel: But then *bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ*.

Prabhupāda: Yes, *ananya-bhāḥ*, they are doing that.

Dr. Patel: Without severing his mind, anywhere he goes...

Prabhupāda: No. They are fixed up in Kṛṣṇa. That is a fact. That is a fact. You cannot bribe them to take from this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is not possible. They may commit some mistake, but they are fixed up in Kṛṣṇa.

That is *bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ*. You cannot deviate them. *sādhuḥ eva sa mantavyaḥ* [Bg. 9.30]. So this qualification they have, and for this qualification they will be triumphant, without anything else. [aside:] We shall return now?

Dr. Patel: Those thirty qualifications do come naturally, as you say, but they come slowly. But [Hindi] we must teach them this in the *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, the qualities of a real *sādhu*.

Prabhupāda: If you make a condition that "First of all you become qualified; then you preach," that will never come. Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore recommends, *yena tena prakarena manah kṛṣṇe nivesayet* [*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.4], that "Somehow or other bring him to Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Then other... *Sarve vidhi-niṣedhaḥ. Vidhi-niṣedhaḥ. Sarve vidhi-niṣedha syur etayor eva kinkaraḥ*. Automatically they'll come as servant. First of all let their mind be fixed up on Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Dr. Patel: But the present difficulties are because they don't know the *vidhi-niṣedhas*.

Prabhupāda: So how they can know?

Dr. Patel: That is the difficulty.

Prabhupāda: How they can know?

Dr. Patel: That is the difficulty.

Prabhupāda: So we... We are bringing them from which status? Yes. You cannot expect that they will be perfect all of a sudden, overnight. It is not possible. But their mind being fixed up on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is the first qualification. They do not know anything beyond Kṛṣṇa. That's all.

Dr. Patel: In our Vaiṣṇava religions this *vidhi-niṣedha* is a must, right from the beginning.

Prabhupāda: Yes. It is must. It is must. But you cannot force in the beginning. That is not possible.

Dr. Patel: But they have to be explained of it.

Prabhupāda: Yes. But if they fix up their mind in Kṛṣṇa, the *vidhi-niṣedha* automatically will come. That process I adopted. When they came to me I never said that "You don't do this, don't do that, don't do that." No. "You simply come here and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa." These are... Old students learned. I never said that "You have to follow these rules, these regulation, then you can come..."

Because if chanting is properly done, then *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam* [Cc. Antya 20.12] – the mind will be cleansed of all dirty things. *sṛnvatam sva-kāṭha kṛṣṇa punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ* [SB 1.2.17]. Simply by hearing and chanting, they will be pious. *Hṛdy antah 'stho hy abhadrani vidhunoti suhṛt satām*. Kṛṣṇa is there. As soon as he sees one devotee is sincerely chanting, he'll help, cleansing the heart. *Vidhunoti*... You will read Ajāmila *upakhyana*. Simply by chanting "Nārāyaṇa..."

Dr. Patel: Ajāmila got it.

Prabhupāda: Offenseless.

Dr. Patel: All psychological matters, and in the *bhakti-mārga*, it is the *sūkṣma-śarīra* which is more important than the *sthūla*.

Prabhupāda: Eh.

Dr. Patel: The behavior of the *sūkṣma-śarīra* is more important than the *sthūla*.

Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. That is... The example is given that Ganges water, even it is superficially..., there are floating stool and foams...

Dr. Patel: Dead bodies also.

Prabhupāda: So this stool and foam does not pollute the Ganges water. You set it aside and take your dip. That example is given that. External feature does not pollute the soul. *Asango 'ya hi puruṣaḥ*. The puruṣa... It is simply our *abhiniveśa*. *Abhiniveśa* is dangerous. Otherwise, the soul has nothing to do with this body.

Dr. Patel: That's right. No, soul is separate from all the three bodies.

Prabhupāda: Exactly like that one is on the motorcar. he has nothing to do with the motorcar, but if he thinks, "My car is life. Everything my..."

Dr. Patel: Air is coming into...

Prabhupāda: That *abhiniveśa* gives him trouble. So this *abhiniveśa* can be removed by increasing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And the Kṛṣṇa consciousness is increased by following the regulative duties = rise early in the morning, have *mangala arati*, this, that, up to ten o'clock. Means *vidhi*.

Dr. Patel: That is religious *vidhi*.

Prabhupāda: So by *vidhi*, he becomes practiced, and....

Dr. Patel: That becomes a nature then.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Then it is nature.

Dr. Patel: And finally it gives you *sakṣad-dharma*.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Dr. Patel: All that thing [indistinct].

Prabhupāda: They are... The *vidhi-niṣedha*, if you give up *vidhi-niṣedha*, then you cannot improve.

Dr. Patel: No, the *vidhi-niṣedha* is a must. Otherwise you are a *daitya* sort of a thing, even though you may be practicing anything.

Prabhupāda: So that they are doing. They are following the regulative principles – no illicit sex, no intoxication, no meat-eating. This is *vidhi-niṣedha*.

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<http://raganugabhakti.freeforums.net/thread/3/link-book-2-articles>

Here is the link to my treatise:

Jīva-tattva: Did We Fall From Kṛṣṇa's Līlā?

<http://raganugabhakti.freeforums.net/thread/117/jiva-tattva-fall-krsnas-lila>

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